Camp Camp Infinite Loops

By: Masterweaver

Camp Campbell wasn't great, but at least Max wasn't there forever.

Then reality broke, and he was. That was just about his luck, really.

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Setting Up Camp

Chapter 1: Setting Up Camp

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1.1 Masterweaver

[Admin Shenanigans] [Camp Camp (ACTIVATION LOOP)]

Be forewarned: Source canon has children swearing. So you know, there will be swears.

Chalchiuhtlicue clicked her tongue, looking over the code rambling down the screen of her terminal. "In which part of you is unhappiness hidden? Or in which part are you hiding?"

"I would say all the parts."

"Your opinion is as unrequested and unhelpful as ever, Wukong." She turned and quirked an eyebrow. "Oh, sorry, 'Monkey.' You sound so much like your alter ego."

The primate leaning against the doorframe grinned broadly. "I have no idea what you're talking about."

"And I don't understand why you keep up this facade of being two people." Chalchiuhtilcue rolled her eyes as she turned back to her terminal. "Multiple names are an aspect of who we are, despite the similarities in some who are confused often. Gaining an extra paycheck is no different than gaining a *larger* paycheck."

"I would think having two sources of income would make it easier to keep some purchases hidden. Of course, I'm only guessing."

"A trickster would care for deviousness, I suppose.... Why are you here?"

"I do run the Red Vs Blue loops," Monkey replied. "And after all the nonsense going on in Remnant, I felt it would be good to have eyes on any related universe."

"Ah." Chalchiuhtilcue inclined her head. "Thus far, I am reviewing who would be the best Anchor candidate. There's fortunately very little dimensional nonsense, but the potential souls all tend to be..."

"Subversive?"

"Morality does not play into it, of course. They simply show little care for more than their own whims." She brushed some dust off her skirt, bringing a few panels up. "Thus far, I've identified only a few that would care for their world's continued existence, if only to suffice their own needs."

Monkey flipped from the door to stand behind her, peering over her shoulder. "Those three? Hmm. I would definitely eliminate David as a choice. He's a little too naive and optimistic to handle the oddities the loops can throw at a person."

"His compassion would make him care for fellow loopers... but you are right," Chalchiuhtilcue begrudgingly admitted. "He would serve better as support, even Unawake. I was more looking toward this Gwen individual."

"Truly?"

"She has endured much in baseline, and retains enough control to continue her efforts."

"Mmm. And what of Max?"

Chalchiuhtilcue scoffed. "The child? Such a warped soul, only recently reaching out. Why the tree offered him up, I've little clue."

"His cynicism is undeniable," Monkey mused. "But it also serves as a shield against the oddities that baseline throws, and such a shield could well last to the point where other loopers awaken."

"An interesting argument. And yet I find myself more attracted to the stable, adaptable Gwen."

"Is she truly stable? She has reacted decisively to oddity, regaining control--but therein lies the problem. A need to control. In these loops, one needs a certain acceptance of misfortune, and that I believe is something she lacks."

The goddess glanced from the trickster to the terminal. "...she would have companions."

"Would she really? She cares for the campers, for their time, but not their selves." Monkey pointed out a small line of code. "A mother, perhaps--and I see your attraction, but mothers rarely confide in their children."

"David... would be too weak to handle what she needs." Chalchiuhtilcue sighed. "So then, it once again falls to the child. Why does the tree allow some so young to bear so much?"

"A seedling can adapt to ill weather greater than the oldest oak... if, perhaps, tended to carefully."

"...I oft forget that you have earned your wisdom." With a sigh, Chalchiuhtilcue flicked the panels depicting the adults away. "He will loathe this, you know. The loss of what he gained, the reversion of those whom he just learned to trust. It will take time for the elders to be welcomed back to his heart, to even be considered by the tree as potential loopers."

"Then focus on his friends. Ensure they awaken sooner. Let him learn to trust again, as he did before." Monkey grinned. "And besides, a little suffering can lead to wondrous lessons."

"Spoken like a true trickster."

The goddess let her fingers hover over the keyboard, eyes upon the screen.

"...I beg your forgiveness, child. What I do now is necessary, but that does not make it right."

With a final click of the keys, she ran the first iteration of the world that hosted Camp Campbell and its twisted inhabitants.

Max woke up. He also Woke up, though he wouldn't learn that expression for a long time. He stretched, feeling around the tent--

--and discovered, to his surprise, that mister Honeynuts was gone.

"Well, that's fucking dandy." He pushed himself up, adjusting his hoodie, and walked out to the mess hall. "I just hope whoever took him didn't do something stupid like dress him up or..."

He paused, staring at a hamster in a cage.

"...Didn't you get eaten by the platypus?"

David grinned broadly as he stepped out of the Mess Hall. "Gooooooood morning Max! Nice to see you up bright and early."

"Yeah, whatever--where are you going?"

"Don't you remember? Today's the day that two new campers are coming to join our happy little community!"

Max blinked as David walked down the dirt path to the camp entrance, whistling happily. He turned back to the hamster in the cage.

"Hey, Gwen?"

The dark-skinned woman growled as she leaned out the door. "What is it?"

"What's the date?"

"June tenth. Why, is it your birthday or something?"

"...Nah, I just figured out I got shunted back in time or some shit."

Gwen narrowed her eyes. "Really."

"Yep. Means I gotta live through this crap again." Max kicked the wall. "Seriously. What the fuck."

"...well, if you ever figure out how to win the lottery, don't go spending it all in one place."

"I'll be sure to remember that." Max waved idly as he followed David. "Better go see if I can re-befriend Neil and Nikki..."

1.2 Masterweaver

Max yawned and rubbed his eyes. "Okay, repeat number twenty-seven. Time to see if I can get Harrison to magic some sort of why am I in the Wood Scouts compound."

"Good morning, campers." The acne-riddled head scout stepped into stark barracks, lightning outlining his form as his slit pupils roved from bunk to bunk. "Today we will be attending to issues of some importance. Notably, some of our members have yet to fully adhere to our standards of *discipline."* His gaze lingered on Max.

Max stared back flatly. He'd escaped this place before, he could easily do it again. Although that led to the question of what he was doing here in the *first* place...

"...That being said." The head scout turned away. "We also have to discuss our current plans regarding Camp Campbell, and its eventual acquisition..."

His words droned on in a typical sleazy villain speech, something Max tuned out as he examined his sleeves. His hoodie was gone, replaced by the khaki uniform of the Woodscouts. It was honestly just a bit of clothing, but.... somehow, he felt incomplete without it--

"--sign him up for the Wood Scouts, maybe they'll whip him into shape--"

The memory came and went, as confusing as it was abrupt. His parents didn't give a shit about him--he knew this, it had been hammered in when he arrived at Camp Campbell--and yet somehow he recalled... not love, exactly. More a resignation, a need to do *something* , instead of just dumping him at some summer camp.

That was wrong.

This was all *wrong* .

"...and when we are finished running drills, I expect you all to come up with ideas regarding our... quaint neighbors." The head scout turned to another camper. "And again, we cannot *murder* them. That's illegal, inefficient, immoral, and messy."

The camper in question huffed in annoyance.

"Very good. Come along, breakfast will be served soon."

The head scout spun on his heels, marching swiftly out the door. Max stared as the other Wood Scouts filed out.

"...well, food is food, I guess."

With a shrug he hopped down to the ground, following after them. He could figure out what was going on later; right now he decided to just go with the flow.

1.3 Masterweaver

"Repeat sixty-three." Max sighed. "What the hell is up with my voice? I sound like..."

There was a pause, as memories were examined.

"...oh." Just to make sure, Max reached down and felt. "Huh. Okay, I'm a girl."

There was another pause.

"Eh, not nearly as bad as repeat thirty-four." Max shrugged as she stood. "Well, at least I'm still prepubescent. I'd hate to have to put up with the same shit Gwen does."

1.4 Masterweaver

Max stared up at his tent's canvas roof, unable--or unwilling--to blink.

"...Re...repeat number 100."

Absently, almost without thinking, he patted himself down.

"Okay. Never going to follow the Quartermaster's prophecy again. Ever. That was a bad plan."

His unblinking eyes stared up.

"...So, good news. Dying isn't permanent. Bad news: that probably means I'm in hell."

For a moment or two, he said nothing else.

Then he took a deep breath. "Right, okay. I'm going to... get up and go to the bus. Yeah. Good plan."

Despite his words, Max didn't move for a moment or two.

"...I'm traumatized aren't I?" He let out a slow sigh. "Great. Juuuuust great. Well, Gwen has a psychology degree, I'll... bug her later, I guess."

He paused.

"Wait, if I'm in hell she's probably a demon."

He considered for a moment.

"...meh, wouldn't make her any different."

The path he took was one he had literally taken dozens of times before. His body was running on automatic, his mind trying desperately to find a way to distract himself from the memories--

--what the hell was a volcano doing in the middle of a forest anyway? And why did Campbell build his camp so close--

--the volcano probably made the land cheap or something--

And here was the bus, back once again. And here was Neil, walking off nervously. And here was Nikki hopping out and...

...and...

She *didn't* bite David's hand? That was... strange.

Max focused on that irrelevant detail, desperate to find something, anything, to keep the phantom feeling of lava out of his mind. And actually, Nikki was acting very odd, not sniffing around as much, though her eyes seemed to dart toward him on occasion.

Almost as if...

Max facepalmed. "Of fucking course."

"Hey!" David admonished. "Language."

Max ignored him, walking over to the green-haired girl. "Okay, just to make sure I'm not crazy: Have you lived through this day before?"

Nikki's eyes went as wide as her grin. "Hey yeah! I was wondering what was up when I woke up on the bus. Kinda thought somebody slipped drugs into my food or something, but Neil didn't recognize me. Why'd you ask?"

Of *course ,* it would be the crazy feral ditz. Oh well, at least Nikki was *his* crazy feral ditz. "Let me guess, the last thing you remember is Parent's day?"

"Yep."

"This your first repeat?"

"Yep. Is it yours?"

"Hundredth."

"Huh." Nikki looked him over. "You do look kinda twitchy."

"Fell in lava last time." Max shrugged. "Turns out death just sends you back. Still hurts, though."

"Neat. I'll have to try that sometime. Anything else you want to tell me?"

"Yeah, sure. Let me just get down some notes...."

1.5 Masterweaver

"...what."

Nikki grinned broadly. "Wow! I know you said things were different sometimes, but I wasn't expecting *this!"*

"Why the fuck are we the camp counselors?" Max asked. "What is wrong with this repeat?!"

"I dunno, Max, but I guess that's how things work." Nikki looked at herself in the mirror. "Huh. I was expecting bigger boobs when I grew up, but I gotta say I like these legs!"

Max stared at her as she pulled off a few athletic kicks, before shaking his head and banishing the images to an increasingly large mental safe. "Don't get used to them, things will go back to normal next repeat probably."

"Roger that! Hey, do you think we should get to work on helping the kids out?"

"What?"

"I mean, we are the camp counselors this time around," Nikki pointed out. "Kind of why we get paid, which is how we eat, and oh my god is this what adult life is like? Worrying about money all the time?"

"Pretty much, yeah."

"Wow, this explains a lot." Nikki paused. "Right, so anyway, the campers--"

"What about them?" Max asked with a shrug. "They're just a bunch of horrible kids who will vanish when this repeat ends anyway."

Nikki nodded. "Yeah, but they're also our meal ticket, so we should at least keep them alive. And hey, warm bodies are always useful if we need floors scrubbed or whatever."

"...Huh. I was expecting you to appeal to my morality or something."

"Would that actually work?"

Max opened his mouth, almost automatically ready to reject the idea... and then took in the genuine curiosity on Nikki's face.

"...I mean... it might, a little," he admitted. "Like, it would have convinced me to listen, maybe."

"Wow, really?"

"Yes, Nikki, really, I'm not a complete monster."

"Nah, just four-fifths of one," the girl quipped with a smirk.

"Yep. Anyway... so if we're really doing this, you should go out and wait for the new campers... which will be Neil and David I guess?" Max shrugged. "I'll work on the paperwork here before wrangling the munchkins around."

"Don't let Nerris hear you call her that!" Nikki reminded, heading out the door.

"Yeah, yeah, I gotcha, I can handle myself."

Max turned to his desk. "Right. I can handle myself."

1.6 Masterweaver

"Hey, Max?" Nikki rubbed her arm. "You don't think I'm stupid, right?"

"I think everyone is stupid in some way. Like David refusing to see what a shithole this is, or Space Kid's... general delusions." Max shrugged. "Or, you know, how hard it is for me to see the good in people."

"Yeah, but... like, I'm not just stupid stupid, right?"

"What do you mean?"

"It's just... I dunno." She glanced over at Ered. "I sort of don't get some things, sometimes. Like, I don't see why people are so weirded out by things like death and sex and animals... it's just nature, you know? And I don't really think I know what goes through the flower scouts' heads. At all. I mean besides not liking their frilly stuff it's like they're all trying to be each other. And I mean, Ered's convinced me to join her with coolness, and Robo-Neil's got me helping him easily, and it's only looking back after these loops that I start to realize that they were... you know... using me."

Max looked at her for a while.

"...Crap. You're looking for actual encouragement, aren't you."

"I mean, yeah. You're kind of the leader person in all this, you know?"

"I didn't ask for that!"

"Look, it's a simple question! Am I stupid or not?"

"Okay look." Max held up his hands. "You ever actually listen to Space Kid when he talks about space?"

"...not really."

"Well, I have." He rolled his eyes at her look of utter disbelief. "Things get boring when you're living life over and over, okay? Anyway, he talks about anything *but* space, he's a moron. You get him talking about rocket science and astronomy and solar systems--the kid. Knows his shit. Like I'm not sure if it's college level, but it's definitely beyond grade school."

"What's this got to do with anything?"

"Nerris knows game stuff, which is usually useless but also means she's got a lot of data in her head. Nurf's actually got a decent grasp

of psychology--even if he doesn't quite get how to use it. Hell, Harrison has *actual magic* --which is honestly terrifying by the way." Max shrugged. "Everyone's stupid in some way and smart in others. It's called being fucking human."

"...yeah, uh, that's very Saturday Morning Cartoon and all, but I'm kind of asking if I am, literally, dumb as bricks."

Max sighed. "What's two plus two."

"Four."

"Red and blue make...?"

"Purple."

"Between our two camp counselors, who do you trust more and why."

Nikki frowned. "Well, they're actually both pretty good at practical things like pitching tents and foraging and driving, but Gwen's got that down-to-earth mindset that I would trust to keep me out of danger and David's more of a caring sort that can keep me from collapsing over my own issues, so... kinda both, really?"

"Congratulations, you are not a moron. Just a naive feral ditz."

The girl beamed. "Thanks, Max!"

"Whatever."

1.7 Masterweaver

Science was not built on denial.

Well, okay, in *theory* science was not built on denial, but in *practice* a lot of the founders of science had to sort of twist the facts to fit the

beliefs of those funding them just to keep themselves alive. So nowadays scientists tended to avoid things like mysticism and religion not because they were necessarily *wrong,* although a lot of it was, but because they were associated with the sort of mindset that would try to blow up the sun if it happened to be the wrong color. So science did not like denial, even though there was a history of denial in the scientific history, but that was only because humans didn't like to have their worldview shaken and some would go to extremes to keep it from being shaken.

The point was, as a proper and modern scientist, Neil was not going to pretend that he was not back on the bus headed for Camp Campbell. He could be hallucinating or dreaming, yes... and there was no way to figure that out from inside the hallucination or dream in question. Besides, how would this reality being fake logically change his actions? He would have to trust that whoever was outside this hallucination was keeping him from falling down stairs or standing by his bedside while they figured out how to wake him up.

Yep.

Trust in others.

Let go and have faith.

Totally logical, and not at all unnerving.

"Okay." Neil took a deep breath and let it out. "Okay. I've done this once, I can do this again."

Nikki turned to him. "Oh hey, are you repeating time too now?"

The metaphorical train of his thought derailed so hard that it ended up crashing into a metaphorical Titanic.

"A... I... you... wha?"

"I mean if you're not you can just keep on pretending I'm crazy," the girl continued with a dismissive tone. "I don't mind."

"I... how? What--I... did... did we go through a time warp?!"

Nikki shrugged. "I dunno. Max repeats a lot more than me, though. Think he'll be happy to have you on board, since... you get that thinky stuff easy?" She gasped. "Hey, maybe you can figure out what's going on!"

"I--I could?"

"Oh, yeah, definitely. I mean, once you stop freaking out about this being impossible and shit." She glanced out the window. "Oh hey, we're almost there! Come on, Max is waiting for us!"

She grabbed his wrist and dragged him down the bus aisle. "Hey! Max! We've got a new timebender!"

"I told you, Nikki, we are not calling ourselves timebenders." Max crossed his arms. "That would imply we actually have control over this."

"Uh..." Neil held up a finger. "Do we not have control over this? At all?"

"Not a bit." Max gave him a look. "So you're stuck with me and Nikki in this now, huh?"

"I... guess. You don't have any idea what's going on?"

"We might be in hell," Max replied as casually as commenting on the weather.

"...No, pretty sure this isn't hell." Neil jerked a thumb at Nikki. "She's here. At worst, it's purgatory."

"Well, if you ever figure out which of my many sins I should atone for, let me know. I'd like to stop living my life on repeat."

"Aw, see Max! Making friends already!"

The three kids looked up at David.

"...Riiiiight." Neil nodded. "Friends. That's what you're taking from this."

"Well, that and you're stuck in some sort of time-based phenomena, but I'm sure so long as you have each other everything will be hunky-dory!"

Max rolled his eyes. "Yeah, sure, and we'll petrify a chaos god with the power of our friendship. Come on, guys, let's talk plans."

Neil rushed after him. "I'd like to start research on this as soon as possible--"

"Sure thing, I'll write up my notes. Again."

"I'll go assert dominance over Nurf!" Nikki declared. "Meet you when I'm done!"

Gwen walked over to David, looking at the three. "So... you're not at all freaked out by the possibility that a bunch of kids might secretly be older than disco?"

"I am completely horrified!" David replied cheerfully. "But if I let them see that, they might break down as well. Best to keep up a happy face!"

"....oooooookay then." Gwen rubbed her forehead. "Well, I'm going to drown out my worries with porn, make sure none of the tykes get into the office."

"Will do, Gwen!"

1.8 ThanatosTiger

"Where the fuck am I?" asked Max aloud as he took in the unfamiliar sights.

Instead of dirt, he found himself standing on linoleum. Instead of trees, he saw rows of lockers. Instead of subpar plumbing, no, they still had that.

Wait a minute.

Max gasped as an influx of memories he didn't have before rushed through his brain as he struggled through a horrifying epiphany.

"I'm in fucking public school!

While Max cursed whatever deities had put him here, the shrill sound of the bell caused students to pour out into the empty hallway. As several bodies pushed him to go god knows where, Max evaluated the choices he had. He could run out, skip whatever classes he had and go wherever he wanted. Or he could find out if his friends were in this horrible place.

His conscience winning out, he tried to puzzle out where his friends were. Maybe he could sneak in the principal's office to check their records.

Wait a minute. He just got a bunch of weird memories about a place he'd never been. Maybe he could check them to see if they were here. Max checked his memories, searching for classes he shared with Neil and Nikki. Unfortunately, he only had one moment where he could talk to them. Lunch. Which was in four fucking hours.

Max had to struggle through classes he barely understood, with morons constantly making dumbass comments, all for a bunch of useless knowledge he would never use in day-to-day life. So it took all his self-control not to slap Neil when he saw the grin on his face.

"Can you believe it, Max! Chemistry! Physics! Oceanography! And best of all, air conditioning without the requirement of dealing with a

bunch of fucking cunts stuck in the Dark Ages!" Neil said that last part with a bit of a growl.

"Speak for yourself," Nikki coughed out. "I can feel the nature nearby, but I'm stuck here for two more periods and I'm paler than a vampire." She coughed that last bit out.

Neil looked over her, concerned. "Okay, that's bad, but look at the bright side. We're sophomores."

'So we'll be learning calculus instead of how to fill out a 401k?" Max asked sarcastically.

"No. It means we're going to learn how to drive!"

"Letting us escape from Camp Campbell early on!" Max exclaimed.

"Yeah!" The two boys high-fived.

"Yay." Nikki waved her arm up lazily before passing out.

1.9 Masterweaver

"Hey Neil?"

Neil sighed, carefully finishing the current wire connection before looking up. "What is it, Nikki? I'm in the middle of building a--"

"High tech science scanner to figure out the repeats, yeah I know, I'm staying away from the wires. But seriously, are you gay?"

"What?"

"Like, not as a stereotype or anything," Nikki said quickly. "Or, maybe a little stereotype, but not in an absolute way, like there's a sort of way Ered's dads behave around each other, which is one kind of

gay, and I'm getting a different sort of gay vibe from you but it's not like you ever actually--"

"Nikki, we are children."

Nikki waggled her hand. "Eeeeennh..."

"Look. If this is about the thing with Tabii, she's... creepily obsessed. Like, if she weren't a flower scout I'd expect her to hold a knife and giggle a lot."

"Oh, no, I totally get that." Nikki gestured behind her. "But you know, there's Nerris if you're into geek girls, Ered if you're into cool girls, me if you're into weird and crazy outdoorsy girls, and I've never seen you flick an eye toward them."

Neil rubbed his brows. "You know, despite all the cliches, there's no reason summer camp needs to have romantic entanglements. I am way too busy dealing with the nonsense this place throws at us and trying to figure out the time thing to care about the possibility of love. There's also the fact that I, oh, have a pretty negative view on relationships because my parents are separated and my dad way too easily seduced, and maybe the possibility that just possibly I am asexual. Oh, and of course, let me bring up again: WE ARE CHILDREN, Nikki!"

"I am again going to say eeeeennh on that last point," Nikki said. "So, just being clear. You are stating that you are not gay."

"Yes. Yes I am."

"Great! You just won me ten bucks."

Neil threw up a hand. "What are you going to even use it for? Once this repeat is over it'll be gone!"

"Yeah, but it doesn't go away until then!" Nikki pumped her fist. "Cheap candy and snacks, here I come!"

1.10 Masterweaver

"Hmmm."

Nikki rubbed her chin thoughtfully. On the one hand, her plan to break the flower scouts of their outdated and frankly sexist stereotypes had worked beyond her wildest dreams, once she started citing precedent and modern feminist pop stars.

On the other, well... as much as she considered Miss Priss to be an overbearing stereotype-enforcing hag of a drug addict who needed to be removed from office and replaced with somebody who actually had something of a heart left, tying her up on a stake and leaving her hanging upside down over the dock wasn't exactly a path she thought the reformed Flower Scouts should go for.

Although she did like the whole Jungle Amazon look that she'd managed to wrangle the girls into...

"...you know, when some adults drink a lot of wine, they go to a place called rehab," she mused out loud.

The gaunt-faced woman's face managed to pale even further, truly an impressive feat.

"But if we, like, send her off to some other place," Sasha pointed out, "they'll totally shut this came down."

"...Then we'll have to have our own rehab! Right here!"

Miss Priss tried to object but found it rather difficult with the gag in her mouth.

"Basically all we have to do is keep her from drinking wine or, you know, taking anything else weird for a while." Nikki shrugged. "I'll go

search her purse and burn everything that's bad, and then we can make her a brand new Priss!"

"You know, I still don't know how you convinced us to do this in the first place?" Tabii wondered.

Nikki shrugged. "I was bored and had a megaphone. Things spiraled out from there."

Hopefully, the camp wouldn't explode. This repeat, anyway.

1.11 Masterweaver

"...Still working on the time-scanner experiments?"

"Yep."

"Anything yet?"

"I've eliminated the possibility of this being a shared hallucination."

Max quirked an eyebrow. "Huh. Really?"

"There are specific ways the brain can break, which can result in a myriad of problems. However, our observations remain consistent despite our disparate personalities." Neil shook his head. "Either we're all crazy in the same way, which means we would all act alike, or we're all crazy in different ways, which means we wouldn't be able to agree on how this repeat affects us, or we're not crazy."

"So... okay, what does that tell us?"

"That the problem is external. It's something in the world."

"Right. Anything else?"

"...there's the matter of contagion," Neil said reluctantly.

"Contagion?"

"You were the first to start repeating, and Nikki second, and then me. And you... repeat a lot without us, even after we came."

Max frowned. "...so I'm patient zero in some sort of time-germ, is that what you're saying?"

"Honestly, the only reason I haven't asked for blood samples is because I don't know enough medical science to actually get anything useful from that."

"...well, look. If I do have some sort of time bug, I'm sorry for spreading it to you guys."

Neil managed a small chuckle. "On the upside, it gives me plenty of time to study and learn new things."

"You would like that, wouldn't you." Max shrugged. "Look, I'm not going to tell you how to spend your time, but if you get too workaholic David's going to come in to try to cheer you up again."

"Yeah, yeah, I'll take a break when I get this set up." Neil sighed. "Won't be able to do anything but wait then, anyway..."

1.12 Masterweaver

[Camp Camp][RWBY]

RWBY at Summer Camp, Part 1

"Eeeeeeeeee!"

Yang glanced over at Ruby, whose smile now made up a good third of her face. "You feeling loopy there, sis?"

"Loopy and anchored and oh my gosh Yang I know I shouldn't be geeking out but it's *Camp Camp* come ooooon!"

Across the aisle of the bus, Weiss rolled her eyes. "That comic you like in the chibi loops?"

"Aaaaand also another Rooster Teeth thing, but let's not get technical, we're going to one of the zanier summer camps in the multiverse!"

"You'd know, I guess." Blake shrugged, flipping through another page of her manga. "Quick check, what's everyone's backstory?"

"Oh, I was over-eager for summer camp and practically begged Dad to sign me up for this one when I heard about it," Ruby replied casually.

"Dad did some research and was suspicious--"

"Yeah, not surprised."

"--but he couldn't resist Ruby's puppy eyes so he signed me up too to keep an eye out for her," Yang finished.

Weiss filed her fingernails. "Jacques and the camp founder are apparently old business friends, I got shunted off here to prove he wasn't just making me a 'lonely rich girl' or something. You, Blake?"

"Weeabo with politically active parents and Adam's my creepy babysitter but I was apparently oblivious to his interest in me so I got him to sign my slip to come here under the assumption that it was some manga-themed camp."

The other three girls stared at Blake.

"...I mean, wow," Yang managed. "I thought this was a kid-friendly setting."

Ruby chuckled. "Ah... no."

Yang looked at her. "No?"

"No."

"...But you read it all the time."

"Yang, you know how sometimes people will have an image they like to project and an interest that runs counter to that image so they never bring up that interest?"

Yang nodded slowly.

"Right, well, I like appearing like an optimistic beacon of good cheer with an aggressive edge in the defeat of evil and a genuine belief that all people are fundamentally good. It's mostly true. Camp Camp is...." Ruby inhaled sharply. "Well..."

"Something that would appeal to my sense of humor?" Yang suggested blandly.

"Something that would appeal to *Neo's* sense of humor," Ruby corrected.

"...What the heck have you been reading, Ruby?!"

"You can say fuck," Ruby deadpanned. "The kids here do it all the time."

Yang threw up her hands, slumping against the bus bench in exasperation.

"You know," Blake mused, "given how much of an internet hound you are when we hit the hub I'd have thought you would have known this already Yang."

"You did quote Nerris during our D&D session," Ruby recalled.

"I was quoting *Barb* ! I saw some merch on the store in the hub and thought it was funny! I didn't know it was from your comics!"

Weiss quirked a brow. "You really never looked into it?"

"I just kind of thought it would be one of those cheesy 'let's all get along' series," Yang grumbled. "The stuff Ruby *should* like." She crossed her arms and gave her sister a pointed look.

"See, this is why I never shared it with you," Ruby pointed out. "I have my image, and this runs counter to it. I mean come on, seriously, don't you all have interests that don't fit your archetype?"

Weiss and Blake nodded with affirmative murmurs. Yang sighed, conceding the point with a shrug.

"Alright, fine. We're five years younger and going to Neo's idea of a fun summer camp. You're the expert here, sis, what should we do?"

Ruby beamed. "Kick back and have a fucking fun family vacation!"

"You don't get to use the F word unless it's actually appropriate," Yang chastised.

"...damn fun family vacation?"

"Can I just say no swearing? Can I use my big sister authority to do that?"

Ruby huffed. "Fiiiiiine. Ooop, we're here!" She jumped over her sister as the bus screeched to a stop, running for the door and springing out as it opened. "Heeeeeello Camp Campbell!"

"Why, hey there, new camper!" The red-headed man in shorts smiled down at her. "I'm just pleased as punch to see an eager new face! You must be..." He looked at his clipboard. "...Ruby, right?"

"Yep! Ruby Rose! And this is the rest of the haul--Weiss, Blake, and my big sis Yang!"

"Well, I'm David, your camp counselor, and these three are some of your fellow campers! I'm sure they're very eager to meet you!"

Ruby's grin widened as she saw just who was with David. "Oh, wow, really?"

"Don't look too much into it," said the asian boy. "We're just wondering what's up with this repeat."

The four girls snapped their eyes to him.

"...what the fuck are you all looking at me like that for?"

Ruby turned to her team. "Right, new plan: Induct the new loopers!"

1.13 BIOS-Pherecydes, ThanatosTiger

[Dan VS.][Camp Camp]

"Why the hell do I have to be a counselor at some stupid camp?"

Chris sighed and pinched the bridge of his nose. "It's community service, Dan. You know, as in punishment for breaking the law?"

Dan grunted and crossed his arms. "How is it my fault if that police officer got stung by a dozen scorpions?"

"You put them in his squad car!"

"Yeah, well maybe he shouldn't have given me that parking ticket then."

Chris sighed again as he pulled into the parking lot of Camp Campbell. "Look, Dan, it's just one summer. It won't kill you to contribute something to society for once in your life."

"Hey! I contribute plenty!"

Chris gave him a disbelieving stare. "You? How?"

"I donate my time to people without friends."

Chris blinked. "That's... that's actually really nice of you Dan."

"Eh, what can I say. I'm a bleeding heart. And while we're on the subject of bleeding, *I swear that if you forget to feed Mr. Mumbles I'll hang you up by your own entrails.* " Dan snarled.

Chris rolled his eyes. "Don't worry Dan. Elise has everything covered. Now get on out there and show those kids a good time."

Dan scowled. "Fine. But not because I have to. I'm doing this because *I* choose to."

"Whatever you say, Dan."

"Hey, what's that tone supposed to mean?" Dan pulled Chris halfway out of the car by his shirt. "I can be a camp counselor! I'll counselor this camp so hard that—"

Whatever Dan was going to say was cut off by a girl flying into him and knocking him to the ground. Said girl jumped to her feet with a loud cheer, holding a football overhead. "Ha! Touchdown! My turn!" she said before chucking the ball and running after it.

Leaving Dan lying with shoeprints on his face.

"...You okay Dan?"

Dan growled as he crawled to his knees before throwing his hands furiously into the air and roaring at the sky. "CAMP CAAAAAAAAAMMMMMPPPP!!!!"

Oh, this is the story.

Of a child named Max

Whose parents left him at Camp Camp all alone

He has two friends

They're Neil and Nikki

And they all cuss like they're grown

This is the story

Of Dan who attacks

Everything in the world that makes him rage

His parents were total monsters

They kept him in a cage

After Max was informed of looping and Yggdrasil

Dan decided to become a quasi-parent

Chris and Elise said that it could be worse

And they're now working together for vengeance

Work for vengeance

Dan & Max are working towards vengeance

1.14 Masterweaver

[Camp Camp][RWBY]

RWBY at Summer Camp, Part 2

The indian boy quirked an eyebrow. "Yeah, no, I'm not getting 'inducted' into your club or whatever. I've got enough shit on my plate as it is."

"Max, Max, Maaaaaaax." Ruby turned around with an innocent smile. "Don't you want to know why you've been time traveling?"

"How the fuck do you know my name?"

"A-bupbup! Please hold all questions till the end of the speech. Oh, first of all, who all here's looping?"

The green-haired girl shot her hand up eagerly. "Ooo! Me and Max and Niel here! Max was the first."

"Hold on, Nikki. By looping, you do mean time traveling, right?" clarified the curly haired boy.

"Yep."

Max crossed his arms. "So are you going to explain this or what?"

Ruby glanced up at David, whose smile looked a little strained. She turned back to Max. "So... do you want him in on this or...?"

The boy glanced up at the camp counselor, his brows furrowed. "...Would it get him looping too?"

She sighed. "Unlikely. He'll probably start on his own. I just thought, if he understood--"

Max glared at her. "Yeah, no, if I need to catch him up I'll do it later."

"Now wait a minute," David said sternly, "if there's something important going on, I should know. After all, I'm responsible for--"

Weiss waved a hand. "Do you have enough food for the new campers?"

"Do I have enough food for the new campers?" David asked himself.

"You might want to check the pantry."

"I should probably check the pantry."

"The new campers will probably explain things later."

"I'm sure these girls will explain things later."

"Maybe Max can handle them until then?"

"Hey, Max, can you show these campers around? I have to, uh, double check something."

Max blinked as David walked off to the log cabin that served as a mess hall. "What the *fuck?"*

"Did you just..." Nikki pointed at Weiss. "Did you just Jedi mind trick him?"

Weiss examined her fingers idly. "Trained by Ahsoka Tano herself."

"...Who?"

Yang preemptively clamped her hand over Weiss's mouth and rolled her eyes. "Let it go, Weiss, the basics first and educate them later."

"Weiss," Neil corrected. "It's pronounced Weiss, like rhymes with lease."

"No, trust me, with her it's Weiss, rhymes with ice."

Weiss nodded behind Yang's hand.

Blake cleared her throat. "We're getting off topic. We need to cover the welcome to the multiverse speech, where's the best place for an uninterrupted talk?"

Ruby turned to Max. "Well? Your loop, you know the way around."

"There's always spooky island--"

"Nope, no, sorry, no." Ruby shook her head. "The potential for uncomfortable visitors is too high."

Max nodded. "Right. Actually, I think the docks should be mostly clear right now." He jabbed a finger at her. "But once we're there, I expect a fucking explanation."

"Oh don't worry, Max. You'll get it." Ruby smirked. "You'll get it and sooooooooo much more."

"...are you flirting with me?"

"Ew! *No!* I'm celibate and you're way too young!"

"Okay, good, cause--"

"I mean sure our voice actors are married but that doesn't mean we have to follow their example!"

"I *thought* he sounded familiar," Blake mused. "Couldn't place it though."

Max opened his mouth, paused, and sighed. "Whatever. Come on, let's get this over with."

1.13 (Con't) BIOS-Pherecydes

[Dan VS.][Camp Camp]

"Hey there! You must be Dan! I'm David, this is Gwen, and that's our Quartermaster. Welcome to Camp Campbell! I know you're going to love it here as much as we do. "

"I've been here five minutes and got *my face stepped on* by one of those little punks!"

"Sounds about right," Gwen said with a nod. "So you're here for some community service thing right? What'd you do?"

"I was framed. It was a miscarriage of justice, and if that moron of a judge had pulled his head out of his ass he would have realized it!" Dan answered promptly.

"Well, that's terrible. But look on the bright side, now you get to spend the rest of the summer helping to shape young minds into happy, healthy members of society."

"Yeah. I'm gonna be honest, that sounds like a load of crap."

"Ha. He's got you there."

"Nonsense. I'm sure that once you meet our campers you'll be full to bursting with camp spirit."

"Look, I don't care about any of this. Only reason I bothered to show up is the fact that this camp Replaced Camp Atrocious after I got rid of Mr. Tedesco, and that's atypical. Unless one of you three bozos are Looping, I'm out of here."

David and Gwen gave each other a confused look. "Looping?"

"Welp that's all I needed to know. See ya," Dan said, and promptly exited the office.

"Wait, you can't go. What about your community service?" David protested, following after.

"Eh, community schmunity. I showed up, didn't I? Just mark it down in your notebook or whatever, and we'll call it even."

"But I can't do that!"

"Sure you can. Who's gonna say other—whoa!" With a shout, Dan tripped over one of the campers in his path.

"Hey! Watch where I'm going!"

"Max! Are you okay?" David called out, moving to help.

"Let go of me! Get off, I'm fine. Who the hell's this guy?"

"Max, meet Dan. Dan, this is Max; one of our more... energetic campers."

Dan sat up with a growl. "Like I give a—ow! The hell? Who just leaves sticks lying on the ground? And... is that a flint?"

"Uh, no! Gimme that." Max said evasively, snatching the fire-starting material from Dan and shoving them in his pocket.

Dan stood with a grunt and peered at the mess beneath him. "Huh. Not a bad try kid. You need more moss though if you wanna get it hot enough to burn down the flagpole."

"What? Max?"

"Pff. Whatever. Not like it matters," Max said, slouching and avoiding David's gaze. "David said your name was Dan? You a Looper?"

"Yeah, so what?"

"So you got a car or something in your Pocket? Closest thing I can fit so far is a bike."

"Eh, sure kid. Why not. Give me a second. Hey, David? Anybody still in the cabins?"

"Uh... no? Why?"

"No reason," Dan replied before pulling out a small remote and pushing the big red button on it. Instantly the cabins exploded.

David gave a high pitch scream of shock and fainted.

"There we go. Balance is restored."

"FUCK YES!" Max cheered with a whoop.

"Let me guess, parents dropped you off for no good reason?"

Max's amusement vanished. "So? Thanks to the Loops I don't remember them anyway, so now we can both forget each other. Good riddance."

"Now that's the kind of sentiment I can get behind. I know all about getting dealt a shit hand, and summer camp is the top of the deck! Though this place is better than Camp Atrocious at least. Or was. Whatever. Point is, when life gives you lemons you need to show up to life's house and shove those lemons down life's throat until it fucking *chokes* to death. Then blow up its house."

"...Don't take this the wrong way, but I think I love you."

"Don't make this weird," Dan said with a cringe. "Look, thanks to some jackass judge I'm essentially banned from going back to Los Angeles until this 'community service' thing ends, so I figure I might as well get a head start on re-revenging myself on Canada and New Mexico. You can either come with me, or I can drop you off somewhere."

"How do you get revenge on a state and an entire country?"

"Pretty easily actually."

"Is this a Looper thing? Cause I'm gonna be honest, that sounds kinda crazy."

"Looper nothing, I do that in Baseline. It was a Looper thing when I got even with Pluto, this is just me checking things off my list."

"You got revenge on Pluto? Why?"

"Hey, that ball of ice had it coming!"

"Right. I'm not sure if your crazy, or really really cool. Either way, I want in. This sounds way more awesome than spending another Loop at Camp Camp."

"Good to hear. In that case, I hereby dub you the interim-Chris. Let's go, daylight's burning and I wanna hit the border by nightfall."

"Right. Uh, hey. You mind if I bring my friends along?"

"Ugggh. Fine. But they ride in the trunk."

1.15 Masterweaver

[Camp Camp][RWBY]

RWBY at Summer Camp Part 3

"Okay, long story short, the multiverse is broken and Max is the most important person in your world, if he goes crazy the universe explodes, also we're from another world and we're billions of years old."

Everyone stared at Ruby for a few moments.

Eventually, Weiss cleared her throat. "Ruby, I think they'd appreciate a bit more?"

"Sorry, I was sort of going for a 'true but useless' joke there. You know, cause--"

"Ruby."

"Alright, alright." Ruby cleared her throat, turning back to the three new loopers. "So. Yggdrasil is the great world tree supercomputer that underlies the multiverse--"

"Wait, are you saying the time repeats are a glitch in the matrix?" Max asked.

"No. The loops are an emergency stabilization mode deliberately instituted while the administrators work on repairing the code of reality. Glitches in the matrix just leave you genderbent or in China or whatever for a loop."

"So we're all plugged into a tree?" Nikki asked.

"No! Well, not the way you're thinking. Souls are real, and this universe is real, it's just... also run by Yggdrasil, which is a quasi-dimensional... look, the point is, something broke reality, and while the administrators fix everything they've put worlds into time loops to prevent further degradation, but in order for the time loop to run you need an anchor which in this case is Max."

The boy furrowed his brow. "Uh, what? I didn't ask for this."

"And I didn't ask to be Anchor for Remnant--that's what our world is called, by the way--but a decision had to be made or your world would rot and you were the best choice." Ruby frowned. "Well, I assume, anyway. I guess there could be a hacker involved, but it doesn't seem likely."

"Wait, hackers?"

"Anyway," Ruby continued, "as the anchor, you are required to remain mentally stable, which is not exactly the same thing as sane. So other loopers," she pointed at Nikki and Neil, "will activate so you aren't alone in this, because most minds don't endure endless repeats without companionship very well. New loopers can come from anywhere but tend to activate via emotional proximity to other loopers."

Nikki cocked her head. "Emotional what now?"

"Basically, the more important you are to existing loopers, the more likely you are to loop yourself. Like, you're Max's close friends, which is why you started looping before David. I'm pretty sure that David's going to start looping soon, though--I mean, even if you don't consider him a friend, Max, he is sort of an important figure in your life."

"See, there you go again knowing things about me when you've only just met me." Max crossed his arms. "What the fuck is that all about, are you a mind reader?"

"No. It's just..." Ruby rubbed the back of her head. "See, there's this world we call the Hub. It's the most stable world, barely damaged by whatever it was that broke Yggdrasil, so the admins store backups on it, which sort of causes the natives to be inspired and write fiction. There's a world where you're fictional. Where everyone can see your baseline--what you would do if you weren't looping." She coughed. "Aaaaand technically backups can be stored in places other than the hub, which sort of means--okay, Camp Camp is a comic book in my world. But it's a full-on webseries in the hub. So... yeah."

"Oooookay." Neil finally stood up. "Let me get this straight--"

"We're bi," Yang interjected, putting an arm around Blake.

He shot them a flat look. "Fine. Let me *clarify* : A magic tree computer thing broke somehow, so the sysadmins started trying to fix it, and to keep us from vanishing they set our program to repeat constantly with Max as a stable data point and the rest of us as stabilizing datapoints and also because of the filing system you know all about us, and you're actually from another world somehow and also ancient."

"Yep."

"So how did you get to our world?"

"Fused loop." Ruby shrugged. "Happens sometimes. Usually random, but admins can arrange it."

"And who are these admins anyway?"

"Oh you know, Zeus, Thor, Ganesha, Thoth, Marianne... Basically, name a pantheon."

"And how the hell did the multiverse break?"

"Nobody knows."

"Nobody knows, of course, how convenient." Neil turned to his companions. "You realize this is complete bullshit, right?"

Nikki frowned. "I dunno. It fits what we've been through."

"Oh come on, really? All of reality on some polycosmic computer--that's something out of a Star Trek ripoff." Neil crossed his arms. "I'm a man of science. I know how the world works, because I have studied it. And nothing, I repeat, *nothing* in my studies have ever--!"

Schrrrr- ***thmmmmmmmmm*** *....*

The sound forced the three campers' attentions onto Weiss Schnee, who stood and calmly balanced an active lightsaber in her hand.

Her eyes roved across the three children, taking in their disbelieving expressions. She took a breath... and then whirled, throwing the bright blade toward a nearby boulder. It passed through solid rock easily, leaving a red-hot glowing gouge, and spiraled a few feet more--before halting, suddenly, in midair. After a moment, the beam righted itself point down, hovering slowly back toward its owner; she held out a finger, letting the tip pass through the shimmering column, then showing it unharmed to the astonished children.

With a snap of her fingers, the weapon deactivated and fell once more into her grasp. The campers stared at it for a moment or two before, suddenly, it simply... vanished.

Weiss turned to Neil, crossing her arms with an insufferably smug expression. "Now, tell me: How many laws of physics did I just break?"

Neil stared at her, gobsmacked, for a moment or two.

Nikki giggled. "Okay, even if they're fucking with us, this repeat looks like it's going to be awesome!"

1.16 Masterweaver, BIOS-Pherecydes

Max let out a massive yawn, scratching his shoulder casually. "Welp, time for another loop of dysfunctional insane morons. This is my life now. Maybe this loop I can get Preston to write a horror play... I'd probably have to ask him to write a comedy to get that out of him."

He stepped out into the morning sun, hands in his pockets as he walked down the dirt road to the wooden poles that marked the boundary between Camp Camp and the rest of the world. His thoughts drifted for a moment or two, considering his goals and plans this time...

"...Wait. Where's David?" Max glanced at his watch. "He should have been here by now, the bus will be coming any minute!"

He turned to look back at the main log cabin complex, just in time to see the man shoved out of the office building by his fellow camp counselor.

"Gwen, I'm serious! I think something is wrong with the calendar, or--"

"Look, you fell into a wormhole, or you had a prophetic vision, or maybe you ate some bad cheese. We can figure it out later. Right now you need to get the two new brats into gear, and I'll keep all the

brats we've already got from getting into trouble." The woman turned him toward the gate and gave him a firm nudge. "Go already!"

David stumbled a few steps, glanced back, then took a breath and stepped forward. "Right. I shouldn't.... shouldn't keep them waiting!" He put on a smile, only slightly forced, and walked to his usual place.

Max quirked a brow.

"...Oh! Max. Right. Uh, can you believe it? We're getting not one, not three, but two new campers today!"

Max continued to stare up, brow quirked.

"...Aren't... aren't you going to say anything?"

"Huh, Ruby was right."

"What?" David blinked. "Ruby? I don't know anyone named--"

"Welcome to the loops, leave your sanity at the door, I'll explain things after Nikki and Neil get settled in."

"Loops?"

"Time loops, David." Max clapped his hands together. "Going back to the past, reliving the same period of time, this is our life now."

David frowned. "Max, did you break time?"

"No. That was something else. Look, like I said, I'll explain things after Nikki and Neil get settled in. Alright?"

"...Alright," David said slowly. "But I'm holding you to that."

"Whatever." Pausing, Max took a second to look around and make sure that no one was looking, before quickly wrapping his arms around David in a split second hug.

David blinked in surprise at the brief contact. "Wha... Max?"

"You tell *anyone* about that, and I will *end* you," he muttered, hunching his shoulders and refusing to meet David's eyes.

David grinned and nodded. "Sure thing Max."

"And stop smiling like that! It makes you look even stupider than usual."

1.17 Masterweaver

"You have NO idea how relieved I am you're looping now," Neil said gratefully. "I mean, don't get me wrong, Max and Nikki are... well, they're a handful each, but they're my handfuls, in a purely friendly way without any unfortunate implications whatsoever."

"I understand entirely," David said with a grin.

"Plus now that we have somebody the shops will actually *recognize* as an adult, I can finally get some things that will let me get real work done."

"...What do you mean?"

"I mean that you can sign all those ridiculous waivers on chemical substances they won't sell to children. What, what did you think I meant?"

David crossed his arms. "Now, Neil, I know you have a passion for intellectual pursuits, but there's a reason they don't sell things to kids."

Neil gave him a flat look. "Our loop lasts a month. I've been around a hundred and fifty times. I may be a preteen physically, but mentally I'm in my mid-twenties."

"...Oh."

"Yep."

David considered for a moment. "...Quick question. Max is our... Anchor, right?"

"That's right."

"And we don't always all loop at the same time, but the Anchor always loops."

"Unless there's a visiting Anchor, and even then they can both be Awake."

"So... if you've had a hundred and fifty loops--"

"Max has probably had ten times that. Maybe somewhere in his hundreds."

"Oh...kay." David took a breath, and slowly let it out. "Well, I suppose you're only as old as you feel!"

"Yeah, that's probably true. The loopers who explained things to us said they were billions of years old, so..."

"Billions! Right." David nodded, staring off into the distance for a moment.

"...Hey, when you're done with your existential freakout, we still need to talk about those totally legal chemical substances you're going to buy me."

"Okay, yeah. We'll do that. Sure."

1.18 Luna Gale

[Camp Camp][Phineas and Ferb]

"Come here, Muack, come here, girl," Nikki whispered through the trees. She thread through the bushes like water. When she let go of a branch, there was a sudden loud yelping behind her. She sighed in exasperation. "Neil, stop being a baby and be quiet!" she hissed, "You'll scare Muack off!"

Neil, nursing his bruised nose and other cut up body parts, glared at Nikki. "First of off, that's not the platypus's name. That's the sound she makes."

"Well, if you can think of a better name-"

"Yes! I can!" he yelled in exasperation. "That's like naming a dog Bark!"

"Shhhhh!"

"Second," he continued, now whispering. He struggled to run up beside her, cursing softly when his foot got stuck in the bushes. "Why are we even after this monster again?"

In one second Neil was struggling to get his socks out of the bristle, the next he was being lifted up by the collar and kicking wildly in the air, as 60 pounds of rage and pure animalistic wildness glared fiery death directly at him.

"You take that back!!!" Nikki hissed, canines practically flaring. "Muack is just a part of camp as David's stupid smile and Gwen's resting bitch face!"

"Okay, okay! I take it back! I take it back!" he yelled, frantically trying to pull out of her grip. "Can you put me down!?"

She lifted him up even higher. "Say it with meaning!"

"How am I supposed to say it with any more meaning?!"

Nikki paused. Her expression shifted from angry chaos to her normal chaotic neutral in an instant. "....good point." She dropped Neil unceremoniously on the ground, ignoring his curses and rambling about murdering her in her sleep later. Instead, she scoped her surroundings. "Now, we need to find Muack soon, before David notices we're gone. Max can only stall for so long."

Neil gave up on cleaning himself off, even if the twigs stuck in his hair and pants were irritating. He slowly struggled to off the dirt ground. "Well, if you hadn't insisted on getting her so soon - *not that I don't like her please stop glaring at me* - it's just that uhhh… we could have waited until our other mascot was gone first."

"But Max didn't want to decapitate David this time," she whined.

"Like you haven't resorted to murdering that hamster before."

"Muack is very important."

"Ahuh." Neil rolled his eyes before eyeing his surrounding with distaste. Trees would never enchant him, hell the outdoors were never any fun except in small, miniscule doses. Continuing to trudge around in the forest in search of a monster platypus was not what he called a good time.

But Nikki rumbled forward, and rather than leave her on her own devices to cause a civil war between the animal creatures (again), Neil took a breath, counted to ten, and after picking out a particularly annoying twig out of his hair, followed the agent of chaos forward on her quest.

Nikki continued to call for the platypus. Every once in a while, she made soft muack sounds to call her, but Neil was pretty sure that only scared her away. They mostly followed the trail of platypus marks on the ground, but every once in awhile Nikki went off her own way, saying she "sensed Muack calling for them" in that direction. Neil was pretty sure that was bullshit science, but Nikki wouldn't let

him get a sentence in otherwise, whispering about her "animal instinct."

"She's around here somewhere," Nikki whispered, "I can feel it."

Neil sighed. "You said that the last few times."

"Yes, but now I can definitely feel it."

"You said that too."

Suddenly, Nikki turned around, and Neil tensed, ready for another 'lecture' by her.

Only to be interrupted by a soft chirping at their feet.

They both looked down. A soft teal colored platypus, with a bright orange bill, stared vacantly back at them. It blinked as the two stared back, it chirped again, the rumbling even longer than before.

"Well," Neil said after a long silence, "you found a platypus."

Neil was sure Nikki would explode, maybe even cry. After all, if this guy was here instead of Muack, then their 'friend' probably wasn't around this Loop.

To his great confusion, Nikki simply shrugged. "Good enough."

"Good enough?" Neil stammered. He watched in disbelief, as Nikki handled the guy with care. "Good enough!? What about that yammering about being part of the camp?!"

She looked at him with a berating stare, going as far as to shake her head. "Neil, Neil, Neil, you're not looking at the big picture. You have to make do with the parts you have and if-" She looked down at the platypus then back up- "he is going to be here instead of Muack, then he'll fit into the platypus shaped hole she left behind. Now, come on, Dopey Eyes!" Nikki said to the platypus, as she once again started trudging through the bushes. "Time to see your new home!"

As the new platypus chirped back, Neil stared dumbfounded, not knowing whether to scream or throw something or both. He really wanted to do both.

"Hey, look Neil! The camp's right here! How convenient right? ...Neil? Neil, stop screaming, you're scaring Dopey Eyes."

"So, how long are you going to pretend you're a regular platypus?" Max asked Perry later that evening. Nikki and Neil, the latter of which looked suspiciously bruised up, were sleeping peacefully, blissfully unaware of the Looper resting in the corner of the tent on his own pile of blankets Nikki managed to smuggle for him.

For a second, Perry didn't do anything, simply pretending to still be 'Dopey Eyes.' But then, what could only be considered a grin curled on the platypus's beak, and a soft chirp broke through. The platypus shrugged the best he could, snuggling deeper into the blanket stack.

Max raised an eyebrow. "You know Neil is going to figure out soon, right? He was just really out of it today."

Perry shrugged again.

"This is just for fun then?"

An affirming chirp.

A smirk curled on Max's face. "Can't argue with that logic. Just don't make Nikki too disappointed when she figures out that you're a Looper and not, you know, a teal platypus."

Perry made a questioning chirp.

"I don't know. Probably too excited to realize you were *the* Perry or something? Do you think I can understand Nikki's brain?"

There was a long silence. Perry was probably thinking of the events of that day. No doubt he was remembering how Nikki climbed on top of the mess hall just to get away from a distressed David and Gwen.

Then he gave a small nod with an equally soft, understanding chirp.

"Cool, glad we're on the same page." Max rolled over in bed.

"..."

"...bet you five bucks Neil will figure out in two days."

At Perry's challenging chirp, Max smiled devilishly towards the tent wall.

1.19 Masterweaver

"Heya David!"

"Huh? Oh, hey there Nikki!" The man put on a big grin. "What's on your mind today?"

"Getting Nurf to dress in drag and infiltrate the Flower Scouts," Nikki replied easily. "What about you, anything you're thinking about?"

David blinked. "...Nikki, do you think that plan is a good one?"

"Nope! But it's not a plan, so its goodness isn't important." Nikki shrugged. "Come on, David, we're stuck in a month-long loop because of reasons. Wild and crazy ideas to entertain ourselves aren't that unexpected."

"Still, exploiting others is--"

"David." Nikki pointed to the golden head grinning smugly atop the flagpole.

"...Well... I'm sure mister Campbell has his... reasons..."

"You can't have it both ways. Either exploiting others is okay, or Cameron Campbell is a bad man."

"...It's... it's a balance," David said. "And it's not like mister Campbell is using others for his *entertainment* , he... he's making a living. By, ah, organizing others into positions where they can use their talents! He's a talent organizer!"

Nikki nodded. "Yeah, okay, I'll buy that for now. Anyway, what were you thinking about again?"

"Oh, nothing in particular."

"That didn't look like your nothing in particular face. That looked... somewhere between 'Chucky Flashback' and 'My Childhood Hero Is A Monster And I Am Only Now Realizing This.'"

David frowned at her. "And you can tell that, just by looking at me."

"Yep. Gotta remember I've been around this loop for a while."

"...right. Twenty-something, according to Neil--"

"Pssssh!" Nikki waved a hand. "Neil is overthinking things like he always does. You know there was one loop where Max and I were the camp counselors, and you and Gwen were the little tykes running around?"

"Really?"

"It was a trip, let me tell you. Jumped up from crazy kiddo to Adulting Responsibly! And then next loop we were kids again." Nikki shrugged. "Thing is, I have memories of adulthood and everything that comes with it--and I do mean everything, good, bad, and intimate."

"Um," said David.

"But that doesn't mean I'm suddenly deciding 'I am a Mature Adult with Mature Needs' cause, you know, I'm not. I can get why people would want it, and I still don't understand why people act like it needs to be kept behind closed doors, it's perfectly natural--"

"Um," said David a touch more urgently.

"--but me personally? Meh. Just... meh. There's a lot of other stuff I could do. Wacky adventures. I don't need to act my age, because my age is immaterial. I'll just be the best me I want to be."

"That... actually sounds like a good plan," David replied with an encouraging smile. "I didn't know where you were headed with that for a bit--"

"I didn't either. Actually, I think I've completely missed what I was trying to talk about." Nikki tapped her chin for a moment. "...Well, if it's important I'm sure it'll come back to me. I'm off to figure out Nurf's cup size!"

"Nikki, I thought we agreed that wasn't a good plan."

"Yes! Because it's not a plan! It's a whim!"

"But if you follow your whims without thinking, you might end up hurting somebody!" David protested. "Nurf, the Flower Scouts, even yourself!"

Nikki smiled beatifically. "And then I'll fix it. Or if I can't fix it, you will. Or if you can't fix it, Max will! And if he can't fix it, well the loop is only a month long anyway."

"That sounds like a dangerously loose attitude to have."

"It can be. Which is why, whenever I have an idea, I ask: Would they enjoy it?"

David blinked. "Would who enjoy what?"

"Like this thing, where I ask Nurf to infiltrate the Flower Scouts. Would Nurf enjoy that? Personally, I think so--if it's played right. Now if I asked, like... Ered to do it? Or Harrison? Nah, that's a no-go. Max might just be 'meh whatever sure' about it." Nikki patted David's leg. "See, I've got it all figured out."

"...Would the Flower Scouts enjoy it, though?"

"They are mentally beaten into complying with sexist gender roles by a self-obsessed drug addict. At this point, I don't think they'd enjoy anything that is not literally a fifties Hollywood cliche."

"Aha! So you shouldn't do it then."

Nikki sighed. "Yeah, I guess you're right. I'll leave the flower scouts out of it and figure out how to convince Nurf to put on a dress with some other motivation."

"...That... is better," David allowed, "and I'm certainly all for exploring a flexible interpretation of gender standards. I just feel it should be up to the individual in question, and not invoked for humor value."

Nikki smirked. "And who here do you think has the guts to laugh at Nurf?"

1.20 Masterweaver

"Hey Max. Where's David?"

"I dunno. I haven't seen him all morning."

Nikki quirked an eyebrow. "Aaaaaand you didn't question that? At all?"

"Do I look like his fucking caretaker?"

"That's an interesting question," Neil mused. "I mean, in theory he's *our* caretaker, but with the way Camp Campbell is run and the fact we're sort of older than him thanks to the loops, it could be argued that--"

"Neil, you're delving into philosophy again."

The boy's eyes went wide. "...Shit. You're right."

"Was that even philosophy?" Nikki asked. "I mean it didn't sound all that high brow. More like personal morality. Is that philosophy? What is philosophy?"

"A garbage heap of lazy intellectuals that don't want to contribute anything practical to the world," Neil said flatly.

"I agree with you to a point," Max countered, "but even garbage heaps can sprout flowers or shit. Like... psychology. You can't use it to gain money, but you can use it to play idiots against each other and laugh."

"I think that's more sociology," Nikki mused. "And wow, I'm using big words today. I think I'll do something incredible, like reinvent fire. Or maybe I'll finally take over the squirrel kingdom!"

"You've been trying to take over the squirrel kingdom for seventy loops, Nikki, it's not going to happen!"

"I'll figure it out eventually. I just have to learn the lingo--"

"KIDS!" David rushed up to the three of them, an expression of panic on his face.

"What is it now?" Max grumbled.

"Something's wrong with Gwen! And I mean really wrong."

"What?" Nikki stared up in horror. "What happened?"

"Well, you see--"

"Hey, David?"

"What is it, Gwen?"

"I think one of the kids fucked with our calendar. I mean, according to this we're back in June."

"Oh! Gwen, you're looping!"

"Gah wh--?!"

"This is great! Wait till I tell Max and the others--"

"Looping, what, get off me! And what do you mean looping?"

"Oh, we're basically stuck living the same period of time over and over because a tree got sick. I still have the pamphlet Max gave me to explain things. He got it from some kids from another reality!"

"--and then she read the pamphlet. Then she laid down on her bed for a minute, then she let out a massive scream, and now she's curled up rocking on one of the armchairs!" David waved his hands. "And I don't know how to help her!"

For a moment, there was silence.

Then Max facepalmed. "Oh my fucking god. David, look, you... never mind. Just... go check in with the rest of the campers, I'll go talk to Gwen."

"Yeah..." Nikki bit her lip. "You, uh, you going to need help with that?"

"Maybe. But not right now. If I'm not back at the tents before nightfall, go ahead and drop by."

1.21 Masterweaver

[Fairy Musketeers][Camp Camp]

"...Dude, you're talking to a flower."

Souta looked up. "Is that really any stranger than anything the other campers do?"

"WITNESS MY POWER!" A dark-skinned girl ran by, wielding a thick tome and 3d8. "YOU WILL BOW BEFORE THE WIZARD NERRIS!"

Max didn't even turn around. "Yeah, I don't care how weird it is, my weird shit meter is pretty fuckin' high even in baseline."

"So..."

"You know what a flower is, right? It's the sex organ. You're talking to the grass's--"

"Okay," Souta said flatly, "that might be what a flower *does*, but that doesn't make it just one thing. You and I are bald apes. We don't engage in dominance rituals."

"Yeah, alright, you've got a point. So what's the little guy saying, anyway?"

"We're having a delightful conversation on the exact nature of compassion in light of the fragility of nature." Souta turned. "It's really very--"

He stared at Nikki, who had a stem sticking suspiciously out of her mouth as she stood near the now flowerless patch of grass.

"Oh don't worry," she assured him, "this one's not poisonous. I think."

Max shrugged. "Yeah... welcome to Camp Campbell."

1.20 (Con't) Masterweaver

Max opened the door to the counselors' cabin. Gwen wasn't rocking on the armchair anymore, but she was still curled up, an expression of abject horror on her face as she stared blankly toward a turned-off television screen. With a roll of his eyes, Max shut the door, hopped onto the other armchair, and pointed a remote at the screen.

"--recent news, a man has saved a dog from a waffle landslide--"

Click.

"--Doreen! After what you've done--"

"I did it to save you! I did it because I love--"

Click.

"--on kids, sing it with me now! ~I wanna be smart and that starts with my heart, so I'll keep a part of my--"

"Ugh." Click.

"--house is a shame, son! You're damned lucky we came here! Brandon, knock out that wall."

Max glanced at Gwen, who seemed to focus on the screen. Okay, good enough. He settled down and watched as a group of wealthy and therefore supposedly intelligent individuals entirely uprooted and altered some random schmuck's lifestyle for presumably their own good.

After a few moments, Gwen blinked. She glanced at Max, slowly uncurling her death grip on her knees.

"...So, like, this is supposed to be the part where I say something wise and comforting or whatever." Max shrugged. "But I'm not really good at that, so let's just face facts: this is going to suck."

Gwen sighed. "Yeah. Yeah, I guess... you'd know that, huh."

"Yep."

The two of them watched the maniac carpenter team convert a bedroom into a gaming den.

"You, uh... you've been through these loops a lot, kid?"

"Yeah, it's been a pain."

"I can imagine. But..." Gwen stretched her legs out slowly. "David said... you and the others."

"Yeah. Nikki and Neil. Nikki actually activated on my hundredth loop."

"So you're not completely alone in this."

"Nah. I mean, sometimes. But the others come back eventually." Max leaned back into the chair. "And there's David now too."

"What, you don't hate him anymore?"

"I mean it's annoying when he's not Awake, he goes back to being..." Max shrugged. "Overly David. But when he is Awake, he... at least he knows when to tone it down a bit."

Gwen nodded. "Yeah, that makes sense. After Parent's Day...."

She trailed off.

Max snorted. "Yeah, after Parent's Day. Can we... not make a big deal about that? It was awful for me, and you and David helped, yadda yadda yadda."

"Yeah, okay. But... if you're repeating time and David doesn't always remember--"

"I usually grab you or him and flat out state that my parents literally signed me up for nothing. Quick check of the paperwork, pat on the head, most of everything happens like it happens except the whole 'David tries to follow Campbell's command' rant doesn't happen. I lose out on the pizza though."

"...that's your biggest complaint. That you miss the pizza."

"That and that David reverts to being irritatingly optimistic over everything. Also never really being able to leave this shitty camp, since I'll always end up here when the loop starts again." Max shrugged. "I mean, there are a bunch of other worlds out there, and our loop's shorter than most--Hey, guess what, there really *is* a time-traveling doctor."

Gwen sat up. "Really?"

"Yeah, but there's also a patch in place that prevents loopers from having kids they wouldn't already have so you can't have his british babies."

"...You know what, fair enough," Gwen allowed. "I'm stuck with something like ten kids already... or maybe twelve. Hey, what ever happened to Scotty, anyway?"

"Sometimes his parents take him away, sometimes he dies, sometimes he vanishes or just isn't ever there. It's one of those loop variable things where what happens isn't really established."

"...Right. The whole... damaged... time. Thing." The woman rubbed the back of her head. "Gotta admit, that is super freaky."

"Yeah. Especially given that sometimes the stable things are little details. Like--oh yeah, just remembered." Max reached behind his back and produced a small bottle. "Got this from Yang, one of the RWBY loopers. The first people to visit Camp Camp from another world, you might need it in a few days."

"What is it?"

"Some crazy sci-fi period medicine she picked up somewhere. She told me to give it to you as soon as you started looping."

Gwen caught the bottle, looking at the label. "Uh... when you say sci-fi period, are we talking about space-age or cyberpunk or what?"

" *Period* period. Cramps and shit."

"Oh! Oh. Wait, that's... that's one of the things that stays stable?"

Max nodded.

"Well... shit." Gwen rolled the bottle in her hands. "I mean, the whole 'it's always PMS' thing is supposed to be a myth--one or two bad goes a year, unless you have some condition, but if I'm going to be living through it all the time--"

"Yeah, once Yang figured out how long our loop was she practically insisted I figure out the subspace pocket thing, just so you could have that. It should last you until you end up in some loop with..." Max waved vaguely. "Magic... healing shit? Apparently, one common effect of 'chakra' or 'aura' universes is how their generic Health Of The Body Through The Soul usually also handles that sort of thing."

"I never thought I would be having this sort of conversation with an eleven-year-old. Or seriously talking about magic from other worlds." Gwen sighed. "Or be stuck at this camp for basically ever. I mean I guess there's a few good points... like... uh..."

For a moment, the only sound in the cabin was the people on television debating whether to get a couch or a futon.

"...there's... fresh air," Gwen said slowly. "And David is not actually terrible... and, I guess you kids can be kind of cute when you're not trying to destroy everything dear in the world..."

"And there is a chance you'll actually meet the Doctor."

"Ha, yeah." Gwen managed a small smile. "There's that. And... there are other worlds, huh? Worlds with magic and sci-fi stuff and... a world of talking ponies, which I feel I should be eager about because of the whole Oh My God, Ponies angle but it's sort of a 'hey yeah' instead of a 'Woohoo!' for me."

"Yeah, I never took you for a pony girl."

"I was always more into fairies than ponies, honestly. I mean, I had a pony phase, but it was more of a horse phase, and it was really more of a cowboy phase then a horse phase. The horse thing was there. Tangentially."

"I hear ya." Max hopped off the chair. "Hey, look, David's wrangling the others on his own. And I mean at this point Nikki and Neil can sort of be considered deputy camp counselors, but they're still Nikki and Neil."

"Right. I guess I should help out..."

"Yeah, maybe. But..." Max dragged a hand down his face. "Crap, I really am not good at this sympathy stuff. Just... mental health days are a thing, right? If you need a few, we'll get it. David needed a few when he started looping. Neil practically had a loop-long freakout. Even Nikki sometimes needs to figure out stuff instead of just spazzing out to distract herself."

"What about you?"

Max blinked. "Me?"

"Everyone needs mental health days," Gwen pointed out. "And you've been at this how long now? How many mental health days have you had?"

"...Enough," Max replied, not looking at her. "Look, don't... make this weird. I'm a cynic, I'll be fine."

"Mmhmm. Right." Gwen nodded slowly. "Alright, you head back. Tell David I... I'm going to need a bit. Maybe tomorrow as well. But I'll be back by the day after at the latest."

"Yeah, sure thing. And... hey, Gwen?"

"Yeah?"

"....Welcome to the loops, leave your sanity at the door."

Gwen chuckled. "Get a move on, you little shit."

1.22 Masterweaver

[Camp Camp][RWBY]

"...Why," Cinder said slowly, "am *I* replacing *David?"*

Emerald shrugged. "Not sure. Tree's crazy sense of humor?"

"Honestly I would have expected to be in Cameron Campbell's position," Cinder grumbled. "Or maybe that Flower Scout troop leader. I mean, honestly, I'm the big bad, why am--oh." She rolled her eyes. "Role reversal. Yay."

"Hey, aren't there new kids that come at the start of the loop?"

"Yeah, but the Anchor's always there to greet them, and they're looping anyway. If they're Awake, no problems, if they're not Awake, he can handle them."

The door slammed open. "Where the *f* --oh, you're not David. Still, where the *fuck* were you?"

"Contemplating the irony of the multiverse," Cinder replied. "Did Ruby tell you about me?"

The young boy crossed his arms. "Maybe. She had a lot of nutso stories and only a month to get us up to speed, it's a short loop."

"Cinder Fall, aliases the Fall Maiden, Beacon's Bane, Darth Cognita, Usurper of Salem, Overlord of Vampires, Destroyer of Worlds, and professional part-time villain."

"Emerald Sustrai, Number One Henchgirl."

"Max Whogivesashit, Accredited Cynic. Fine, introductions are out of the way." The boy jerked a thumb behind him. "You want to come out and actually do your job before these kids kill each other?"

Cinder tapped her chin thoughtfully. "You know, it's incredibly tempting to see just how much of a mess this can become..."

Emerald gave her a look.

"Alright! Alright, fine, I wasn't serious anyway. It's only for a month or so, right?" Cinder paused by the door, glancing down at Max. "By the way, you might be the local Anchor but I'm not going to take any shit, got it?"

"Whatever. So long as nobody dies or gets stuck in the hospital for a week, I'm good."

"AND THEN SUDDENLY I WAS HERE!" A tiny figure in overalls jumped in from the side. "Hey, you're not David *or* Gwen!"

"No, I'm not. Want to learn how to set a house on fire?"

"Do I?!"

Max rolled his eyes. "Nikki, she's not actually going to teach you how to set a house on fire."

Cinder crossed her arms. "I might."

Emerald snorted as she stepped out after her. "Okay, seriously, have you ever actually set a house on fire? Usually, you just set people on fire, not houses."

"Well, usually the houses I set on fire are more mansions then actual houses, but I do occasionally engage in petty arson. Mostly when I need to release some stress, you know?"

"You are *not* ," Max stressed, "teaching Nikki how to set houses on fire."

"You are *not* the one paying my bills."

"Wait a minute." The little girl peered at Emerald for a moment, and then gasped. "Green hair and red eyes, just like me!"

"...Uh..." Emerald looked at her. "...well, your eyes are *pink* --"

"Which is really just lightish red, and my hair is lightish green, and my skin is lightish brown."

Max raised a hand. "Speaking as a brown person, no it isn't."

"Melanin is brown, Max! Ergo, I am reeeeeeally pale brown." Nikki stood next to Emerald. "I'm like a tiny washed out version of her!"

"I... guess you are," Cinder agreed hesitantly.

"Oh my gosh, we could be sisters!"

"NOPE." Cinder raised her hands. "Nope! Nope nope nope, the Remnant Looper Family Tree is complicated enough as it is."

Emerald quirked a brow. "Isn't that my decision?"

"Emerald. Emerald, you know it's true."

"....Alright, fair enough. Sorry, Nikki, we are Totally Not Related."

"Awwwwww. Wait, was that 'totally not related' an ordinary phrase or all caps sarcasm?"

Emerald smirked slyly. "Well, how about this. We spend the loop figuring out if we're totally not related or if we're *Totally Not Related,* and make the decision at the end. Fair?"

"Alright!"

Cinder covered her face. "...why. Just... why."

1.23 Masterweaver

"Hey Gwen!"

"Hey, Nikki." Gwen waved idly. "What's on your mind?"

"I'm thinking of starting a treehouse village. Like in that old movie where the teddy bears fought the egg people with flying gunbikes and sleepy walking boxes!"

The counselor paused, screwing up her face for a moment. "...Star Wars?"

"That's the one!" Nikki grinned. "So do you want to join me or try to stop me or just relax or what?"

"I mean, it's only... thirty-something years old. I'm in my mid to late twenty-somethings. Am I old?"

"See, I think there are like... layers of old. You're old, but not *old* , and definitely not ***old*** . I mean we've had loopers visit that are like, billions of years old, but they didn't seem old at all."

Gwen stared at her for a moment.

"Do I really have to be serious?" Nikki asked her. "I mean, I don't want to be serious. But if I have to be I will."

"Kid--" Gwen paused for a moment. "...Nikki, I... look. I get the whole 'age is what you make of it' thing. And it's more true now then it was before I started looping, just..." She gestured around at the camp. "This was supposed to be a temporary stop in my life. A way to pay the bills. I never really... you know... cared about this sort of thing. I mean yeah, you kids have grown on me--once you all stopped trying to make everything about yourself all the time. But..."

"But you didn't see yourself living the rest of your life in this role and now you're stuck here for basically eternity with only a few admittedly incredible vacations scattered in the distant future?"

"...yeah, pretty much. Am I really that predictable?"

"Nah." Nikki paused. "Well, yeah, but that's just because you're still getting used to all this. Neil went through the same thing for a bit, he just focused on science instead of the endless entrapment of being trapped in a terrible situation. And hey, consistency is kind of a big thing, since you know... the less stable we are, the more likely the world is to fall apart."

"Yeah..."

"So... Anyway, sure, you're stuck here. No way around that. But that just means you need to make it a place you want to live in."

"I can see where you're going with this," Gwen said flatly. "Make the best of a bad situation, right?"

"Actually I was going to say 'treehouse villages are awesome you should help me make one' but, sure, that works too."

The counselor smiled faintly. "Yeah, treehouse villages are awesome, aren't they? Just... tell me you're making sure they're structurally stable."

"Of course they'll be structurally stable! I mean, come on, with all the crazy things we've done you think I wouldn't understand how to make a treehouse structurally stable?"

"You know what? I'll come along with you and double-check your work, if you can get David to look after the rest of the campers."

Nikki gave her a sardonic grin. "Wow. That's *definitely* going to be hard to do."

1.24 Masterweaver

"So, anybody got anything they wanna do today?" Max asked.

"We could talk to the weird half-naked chick standing on the docks," Nikki offered.

Max frowned, following her gaze. Sure enough, there was a woman on the pier who apparently thought that a decorative shawl would somehow hide her lack of shirt or other usual upper clothing. To be fair, the complex headdress and jade skirt did go well with it.

"Okay, that's... new. Is she looking at us? She's looking at us." Max sighed. "Shit, we're going to have to deal with this, aren't we?"

"I... don't really know," Neil said. "I mean, a strange woman on the docks, that's sort of ghost story stuff right? Or at least horror movie stuff."

The woman gestured gently. Part of the lake started to flow uphill, softly slithering toward them.

"Okay, magic water half-naked chick at a summer camp," Max surmised. "Neil was right, this is definitely a horror movie thing."

"Don't be ridiculous," Nikki said dismissively, "the sun's still up. It can't be a horror movie if it's daytime."

Neil shook his head. "That's not exactly true, Nikki--"

The water flowed gently by them and into the mess hall. A couple of shrieks sounded out before a dripping boot kicked open the door.

"Alright," said Gwen, squeezing her ponytail dry as she stomped out, closely followed by a sopping David. "Who's the wiseass who figured out waterbending?"

Max, Nikki, and Neil all pointed at the docks.

Gwen looked at the barefoot woman walking toward them and sighed. "Right, great, of course. Some sort of Aztec water spirit."

"Goddess, actually," the woman corrected. "I am she known as Chalchiuhtilcue."

"Chaichi wheaty kay?" Nikki tilted her head. "Are you, like, a breakfast god or something?"

The woman gave her an amused smile. "Well, I did create fish for the fifth world..."

"Aren't you... uh... a little under-dressed?" Neil asked.

"Why do so many cultures childishly sexualize mammaries?"

"Excuse me, miss Wheaty Kay," David interjected, "I'm afraid we didn't exactly schedule any meetings with Aztec goddesses and, while I'm certain you would create quite an educational event for the campers, I don't think that we are prepared for a deific visitation at this time. Maybe later, when we--"

Gwen frowned. "David, you did hear the part about her being an *Aztec* goddess, right?"

"I assure you, I have always preferred animal sacrifices. However, I am not here in that particular capacity. I simply thought I would come down to discuss the future of your loop."

Max blinked. "Wait. You're an admin."

"Yes. And the one assigned to this world." The woman knelt down to look him in the eye. "First and foremost, I apologize to you. My choice of potential anchors was slim enough that you were selected by necessity, but that does not mean you should have endured what you did."

Max opened his mouth, paused, and glanced away. "Yeah, well.... I mean, I have this whole list of complaints I always wanted to give to whoever the fuck was in charge--"

"I have only recently been assigned to this world, so I cannot change anything in its past, nor will I brazenly alter the world for your benefit or comfort as it may destabilize its already fractured coherency. However, I do intend to ensure many fused loops so that you are allowed to expand your horizons from this small camp and gain your own might and magic. Any other complaints, I am afraid, will need to be addressed later. For now..."

She stood up. "For now, I am simply here to inform you that I have finished the initial stabilization of your loop and intend to seek out the further damaged data. That means your reality will expand past the events of Parent's Day, though I cannot entirely guarantee the regularity of these expansions. I felt it best to alert you all that this might be happening."

"Well, that's good news!" David proclaimed. "Thank you miss Wheaty Kay--"

"It's adorable when children mispronounce my name, far less when others do."

"--uh, miss... Chalchiuhtlicue.... for letting us know! I'm sure we're all looking forward to it."

"Indeed. I shall leave you to your lives, then." Chalchiuhtlicue turned, walking into the lake and vanishing without another word.

"....Well, that just happened," Neil managed. "We just met a god. Which... actually puts a lot of my beliefs into question."

"And we're getting longer loops now," Gwen said flatly. "Or we will be. I don't know if that's a good or bad thing."

"Oh come on, Gwen, it's all a new adventure!"

Nikki beamed. "Yeah! David's right, Gwen, we could get a lot of crazy stuff!"

Max sighed. "Whatever. I'm getting coffee."

-One person in a Loop, often the main character, is an Anchor. They are the person who first starts time looping.

-There is always at least one Anchor present in a given Time Loop snippet, though it may not be the local one.

-The standard pattern for a loop is that the Anchor (and whoever else is Looping there) come to awareness in a loop at a particular point in the story. From there, events will play out as influenced by the Loopers present, acting with the benefit of their foreknowledge, until either a predetermined end point is reached or all the Loopers have copped it.

-To be Awake is to be aware of the time loops (that is, to have gone back in time this time.)

-The Anchor is the only character guaranteed to be Awake. Even after others have started looping, it is mostly random as to whether

they will be Awake this particular loop.

-Crossovers, fusions, and alternate pasts can also take place. It is perfectly possible, for example, to have the characters Awaken into a loop which conforms to a fanfic universe rather than reality.

-Loops do not have to be in chronological order, but it is strongly preferred that they not require a mutually contradictory order (where A must be before B and B must be before A.)

-Just about every Looper is very, very stir crazy.

Compiler Commentary

-1.1: Life sucks. Then you live it again.

-1.2: Life sucks. Then you live it somewhere else.

-1.3: Life sucks. Then you live it differently.

-1.4: Life sucks. Friends don't.

-1.5: Sometimes you've got to roll with the curveballs.

-1.6: Nobody is a complete idiot. Unless they want to be. Feel free to burn those people.

-1.7: A logical approach to a new situation only works if the situation is logical.

-1.8: Education is always important. What kind of education, eh, that depends.

-1.9: For the record, if you want to ask which way the characters swing... They're preteens, what is wrong with you?

-1.10: Let's be honest: She could have done SO MUCH WORSE.

-1.11: Science is a crucial matter of study, after all, it's not like the answer is just going to drop by with a bunch of new kids.

-1.12: Oh hey look, a bunch of new kids.

-1.13: My opinions on the matter of proper vengeance differ from those of Max and Dan. So too does my access to explosives.

-1.14: The new kids show off. A little. Just a little.

-1.15: Okay, the new kids show off a lot, but come on at least they're explaining things!

-1.16: Max really liked that pizza.

-1.17: It's always sobering to realize the kids you helped raise are now adults, especially if they're still kids.

-1.18: Don't be ridiculous, Max, that can't be Perry the Platypus. Perry the Platypus wears a hat.

-1.19: Different people have different definitions of 'reasonable.' And then there's Nikki.

-1.20: Let's be honest: This is a totally reasonable reaction. But hey, she has friends.

-1.21: When you think about it, a lot of what people do is actually pretty weird. You're reading a story about time loops based on a web series about cynical kids at summer camp made by a bunch of people that started out making some mediocre-quality comedy shorts with a video game. And you're doing it on what amounts to heated-up sand in artificial false bone.

-1.22: Yeah, the RWBY crew might drop by more than usual. If you're in the same cluster...

-1.23: Treehouse villages are fun, but not actually practical.

-1.24: They can't just stay in season 2 forever!

The Infinite Loops is a multi-setting, multi-author shared multiverse, with contributions from the Spacebattles forums. If you would like to write for the Camp Camp loops, join us at the Miscellaneous Infinite Loops thread. If you would like to write for other fandoms, check out the Miscellaneous Infinite Loops thread and the Hub Index to see where they might be.

https://forums.spacebattles.com/threads/infinite-loops-miscellaneous-section-catch-3x3.450936/

https://forums.spacebattles.com/threads/infinite-loops-index-the-hub-back-up.448634/

Catch Fish, Bugs, Bears, and Honeybees

Chapter 2: Catch Fish, Bugs, Bears, and Honeybees

(See the end of the chapter for notes.)

2.1 ThanatosTiger

[MLP:FiM/Camp Camp]

Sunset smiled as she jumped off the stage. Camp Everfree was still in the hands of Gloriosa Daisy and Timber Spruce, thanks to a spectacular performance from the Rainbooms. Speaking of which, Timber was walking towards them, probably to congratulate a certain someone.

Or at least that's what she thought until she got a ping from whoever was replacing him.

Answering back with a Ping of her own, she decided to grab a table and wait to see who the looper was.

"I gotta say, I'm surprised this whole thing ended up the way it did. I was expecting your plan to go in the shitter, and I'd have to save it myself."

"And how would you do that?"

"Simple, explain to everyone how Filthy was trying to force us to sell something near and dear to us, tie him up, then sell everyone a buncha shit to throw at or pummel him with."

Sunset raised an eyebrow at that. "And the eventual assault charges on everyone who participated?"

‘Timber’ winced at that. “Okay, that would’ve caused some trouble. It did work in my baseline though.”

“Really, what would that be?”

“Camp Camp. A bunch of kids are sent to a rundown summer camp with idiotic counselors and a quartermaster that attempted regicide. I’m the Anchor, Max.”

Sunset’s eyes bulged to the size of saucers at that. “Okay. You seem kinda fond of it, except the whole regicide thing.”

“Fuck no! I mean, my friends are awesome and David’s become more tolerable, but I don’t like that much. I mean, at all!”

Sunset rolled her eyes at that. “If you say so. The girl you’ve been flirting with the whole month is heading towards us.”

“Huh, what? Hey! Come back here and explain shit!”

2.2 Black Omochao

[Fairy Musketeers/Camp Camp]

“I still don’t know what our parents were thinking, Souta, sending us to this shoddy excuse for a camp…”

“Oh come on, it’s not… that bad,” Souta tried to assure his non-Looping childhood friend as they both walked around Camp Campbell. They had arrived a couple of days ago, according to his memories, and Ringo had spent almost their entire time there scrutinizing every imperfection about the camp.

“This isn’t at all like what my parents described it would be!” Ringo kept complaining.

Max came around the corner and looked between Souta and Ringo, before letting out a Ping, which Souta responded to. “So, you’re here again?”

“Yeah, seems so,” Souta smiled.

Max just rolled his eyes. “Awake and looking for an Anchor?”

“I’m pretty well Anchored myself, I assure you.”

“Souta! Why are you talking to him?” Ringo questioned suspiciously.

Souta looked unsure of how he should answer, his UnAwake-self had not really interacted with Max it seemed. “Um, he’s…”

“We just crossed paths and I felt like saying ‘hi,’ not sure how that’s any of *your* business,” Max answered simply.

Ringo glared at him. “It’s *my* business because I need to look out for Souta!”

At his friend’s aggressive tone, the Key to Erde tried to calm her. “Hey now, Ringo, there’s no need for any– “

“Well it sounds like you don’t think your *friend* can look after himself. What, you just tell him what to do all the time? Make sure he doesn’t make any other friends without your say-so?” the local Anchor questioned critically. “Pretty shitty ‘friend’ if you ask me, Souta.”

Ringo stuttered a bit as she tried to defend herself. “Wha-I-ARG!” She let out a frustrated noise as Souta kept trying to calm her. “Where do you get off… I… we…”

“Ringo, calm down, you know Max is like this. Don’t let him rile you up,” Souta spoke in a calming tone.

Ringo took a few breaths before shaking her head. “Come on Souta! Let’s see if there’s anything worth doing in this camp, as far away from this guy as possible!” She huffed as she stormed off.

Max watched her as he stood by Souta' side. "You sure know how to pick 'em, Souta." He smirked and gave Souta a thumbs-up.

The visiting Anchor let out a defeated sigh. "You didn't have to say that stuff to her…"

"Eh, she can handle it, she was smart enough to realize what a dump this camp is. Of course that wouldn't take much intelligence, but she's probably able to handle a bit of questioning to the nature of your relationship," Max said with a shrug.

"The nature of our 'relationship,' is that she's my friend…" Erde's Key specified.

Max rolled his eyes. "Yeah, somehow I don't think *she* sees it that way…"

"Please don't, I'm not ready to deal with her or Shirayuki's feelings, I'd prefer to stay away from that *at least* until they're both Looping…"

"It's your business, man," the local Anchor replied dismissively. "Just be prepared for a shitstorm in the future."

Souta stared at him blankly for a moment, looking unsure of how to respond.

"Souta! Come on!" Ringo called out from a few feet away.

Souta flinched. "Coming!" he called out to his female friend, before looking back towards Max and giving him a bow. "See you later Max."

"Yeah, see ya." Max uncaringly waved as the brown-haired boy ran after his friend.

"Who does that guy think he is? Calling me a bad friend! Can you believe him, Souta?" Ringo ranted as Souta caught up to her, stomping through the camp with an angry scowl on her face.

“Max is abrasive Ringo, but he isn’t so bad once you get to know him. He also likes to rile people up,” Souta explained calmly.

Ringo glared at him briefly, before letting out a sigh. “I suppose I shouldn’t let it get to me… but I still don’t like that guy.”

“I’ll make note of that.” Souta gave a small smile as his friend calmed down. “So what was it you wanted to do anyway?”

“I don’t know, what even is there to do in this stupid camp? I swear, I don’t feel like there’s been any worthwhile activity to do since we got here,” Ringo grumbled as she looked around.

“Well it is a camp, what about hiking?” Souta suggested.

Ringo opened her mouth to reply, but the two were interrupted by their overly enthusiastic camp counselor. “Hey there Souta, Ringo! How are you two enjoying camp so far!?” David asked with a big smile.

Ringo gave him a deadpan expression while Souta smiled kindly. “We’re doing just fine, sir,” the visiting Anchor assured, despite his friend’s scoff.

“That’s great to hear! Though there’s no need for the ‘sir,’ Souta. We’re all friends here’s at Camp Campbell! Just call me David!”

“Okay, I’ll try,” Souta nodded.

“This camp still doesn’t seem all that great ‘David,’ there isn’t anything to do!” Ringo exclaimed.

Souta winced. David did not seem perturbed by the young girl’s outburst. “Nothing to do? But Ringo, this is Camp Campbell, don’t you see; you can do anything here! You just need to have the right attitude!” the adult explained with vigor in his movement.

Ringo looked unimpressed.

“Aside from that! I’ve got some exciting news; you two aren’t going to be our newest campers for much longer!”

“That time already, huh?” Max suddenly voiced as he walked up to the group. “Surprised you’re not already at the gate.”

Both David and Ringo seemed confused, though Ringo quickly gained a glare. Souta just pretended he didn’t hear him.

“Oh well, you were saying?”

“Um… thanks, Max.” David’s baffled expression only lasted a short time before his smile returned and he continued, “You see; we’re getting not one, not two, but *three* new campers today!”

“Three?” Max questioned critically.

David nodded, oblivious to the Anchor’s concerns. “Yup, so let’s be sure to give them great, big Camp Campbell welcome!”

“Would that welcome include remodeling the *entire camp*?” Ringo asked bluntly. “Because otherwise I doubt they’ll be happy no matter how we welcome them.”

Max snickered at this while Souta tried to look away.

“Now, now Ringo, I know things aren’t exactly like you were expecting here, but the first step towards having fun is a positive attitude!” the adult assured.

Neither Ringo nor Max looked impressed.

“Come on guys, he’s right; positivity,” Souta nervously reasoned, though neither of his companions looked to care much.

“You’re too willing to compromise, Souta, sometimes complaining is justified,” Ringo hissed quietly.

Souta drooped a bit as he sighed.

Before any more comments could be a made, a honking sound was heard from the nearby gate. David gasped with anticipation and joy. “The bus is here!” He quickly rushed toward the gate.

Max rolled his eyes while Souta watched with concern when he ran headfirst into the large vehicle. Both Souta and Ringo flinched at the sight.

“Well, better make sure he’s okay…” Max reasoned with a shrug as he moved after the counselor. “And to make sure Nikki and Neil haven’t been replaced…” he added under his breath.

“…We should follow,” Souta insisted as followed Max.

“Well… this is *something* to do,” Ringo relented, following Souta.

“Kids are here,” the Quartermaster announced from the driver’s seat of the bus when the door opened. Max gave a small smile when he saw his two friends on the bus, which he quickly hid.

“Ha!” The girl with blue-green hair jumped out of the bus enthusiastically, taking a whiff of the air. “Oh yeah! Smell that nature!”

“Yup, smelling it all the time, Nikki,” Max rolled his eyes.

Nikki stared at him for a moment, before grabbing him by the shirt, “How do you know my name!? Are you a spy!? A mind-reader!?”

“Neither, David mentioned it earlier,” Max replied in an unchanged tone.

“I… did?” David questioned, a slight look of pain on his face as he pulled his body up.

“He did?” Ringo spoke up skeptically as she and Souta made their way over.

“Yeah, he did… Neil’s too,” Max added as Nikki let him go.

“Huh… well, I don’t remember that, but good on you for remembering Max! You must be eager to be their friend!” David smiled, but Max didn’t respond to that comment. “So, welcome to camp Ni–YOEWCH!” The camp counselor cried out as Nikki bit into his hand.

“So… yes, my name is Neil, but… is this science camp…? I was signed up for science camp,” a brown-haired boy spoke up as he exited the bus.

Nikki let go of David’s hand, so she could speak. “No silly, this is adventure camp!”

“Well we were signed up for summer camp, instead we got this,” Ringo huffed.

“I… think it’s okay,” Souta assured, despite the skeptical looks of the two new campers.

“Well, you two will be happy to know that Camp Campbell is…” David began, but trailed off as he glanced between the two kids. “Say, where’s our third camper?”

“Oh, you mean the other girl? Probably still in the back of the bus! She didn’t like talking,” Nikki explained with a shrug.

“Oh, probably shy… well, I’m sure a good time at Camp Campbell making friends will help her out!” David said with cheer before approaching the bus, “Well hey there, new camper! Come on out! The fun of camp awaits!”

“Oh… so we’ve arrived.”

A familiar voice hit Souta’s ears, his eyes widened in surprise at the girl that came into view; she wore a mundane set of overalls with a skirt, and had been aged down like he and Ringo, but he’d recognize

that silver-blue hair set-into pigtails, deceptively innocent face, and hands covered by green oven mitts anywhere.

“Gretel…” the Key to Erde muttered quietly to himself as the girl stepped out of the bus.

“So, you must be Erika! Great to have you here at Camp Campbell!” David greeted.

Gretel, or Erika, scanned her surroundings carefully before looking up at David.

“This is Camp Campbell, correct?”

“Yup, that’s what I said!” David gave his enthusiastic reply.

Gretel’s eyes narrowed slightly. “And this camp is run by… a Mr. Cameron Campbell?”

“Why yes it is! Aren’t you a well-informed young lady!” David praised, ignorant to the dangerous aura the girl was emitting.

Souta looked concerned, but also a bit confused on why Gretel was asking about the camp…

“Yes, I do my research,” Gretel’s aura returned to normal as she gave a small smile. “So… where might that man be…? Cameron Campbell, that is?”

“Oh, I’m sorry Erika, but Cameron Campbell is out adventuring throughout the world right now, I doubt he has time to stop by at the camp right now,” David explained carefully. ”Though if I had realized any of our new campers wanted to meet him I would have tried to contact him.”

Gretel’s expression briefly changed to a glare, which quickly subsided for one of calm. “I see… so, Cameron Campbell is not here?”

“Afraid not,” David shook his head.

The small girl seemed to go into thought. “But… he may come here at some point?”

“Well I would hope so, I think it would be good for all of our campers to meet our great founder!” the camp counselor nodded enthusiastically.

“…It’ll have to do I suppose,” Gretel muttered quietly, before giving a cheerful smile. “Well, camp should still be fun!”

“That’s the Camp Campbell spirit, Erika! Never let disappointment keep you down!” David approved.

“…Well, that wasn’t suspicious as hell,” Max commented from his position between the other four campers.

“Really? I thought it seemed pretty suspicious,” Nikki pointed out. Max facepalmed.

‘*Why is Gretel here? And why is she interested in if Cameron Campbell is here…?*’ Souta thought to himself, he looked towards Gretel, and she looked back at him. Souta flinched and quickly looked away. ‘*Is she here for me? I’m not sure if Fandavale exists this Loop… if it does, and Gretel was sent to capture me, why haven’t any of the Musketeers shown up?*’ Souta shook his head as he considered various possibilities. ‘*I have the Key’s power under control, so I should be able to handle myself whatever happens, but I should keep my guard up…*’

“Souta! Snap out of it!” Ringo’s voice called out, pulling Souta out from his inner-thoughts.

“Huh? Ringo?”

“You went all blank on me again! Is something wrong?”

“Um… nothing, just thinking,” Souta assured.

Ringo gave a sigh of aggravation.

2.3 Masterweaver

"So we had an expansion," Max mentioned offhandedly.

"Another one?" Nikki gasped. "Oh my gosh it's like time is actually progressing for once!"

Neil cleared his throat. "Did anything... interesting happen?"

"Nah."

There was a moment of silence.

"...What," Nikki managed, "Nothing at all?"

"Well, I mean, Ered had a brush with her own mortality and apparently there's a crazy death trap skater park in the woods, but it wasn't really anything worth mentioning."

Nikki glanced over to the girl in question. "...Max, I know she's not looping, but that doesn't mean we should just dismiss her struggles off-hand. She's a person too."

"Hey, I'm treating her exactly like I treat loopers," he protested. "She got over herself without me, so there's no need for me to worry."

Nikki frowned to herself. "...hmmm."

"What?"

"Nothing, nothing." She continued eating her breakfast.

Max looked at her for a moment. "...yeah, you better believe it's nothing."

2.4 Boohoooo!

(Camp Camp X Marvel)

"Ok everyone, we have a guest speaker today: Cosmo the Dog... Wait, what? Meh, whatever," Gwen announced unenthusiastically, as said Russian Dog Astronaut stepped forward.

"Thank you, comrade. Now, I'm here to say how much better the Russian space program is than yours," Cosmo stated.

"....What the FUCK did you just say?" Space Kid glared.

"You be hearing me," Cosmo glared back.

"...Neil, hold my helmet," Space Kid deadpanned throwing his helmet at Neil. He then ripped his shirt, revealing a six-pack.

"Whoa! Space Kid is packinggggg!" Nurf commented as the space-obsessed child piledrived Cosmo.

"That's how we do it in America, motherfucker!" Space Kid glared as an epic, Ernie vs. Peter-esque battle broke out.

"...What the hell is happening?" Max blinked.

"I dunno, but this'll be good blackmail if Space Kid ever Loops!" Nikki smirked.

"Noice," Max smirked.

"...Man, we are assholes." Neil lamented. David just stood stunned.

2.5 Masterweaver

"Hey, Nikki."

"Hey Max. What's with the weird look?"

Max shrugged. "So... we had an expansion."

"Oh! What crazy shenanigans did I get up to? Did I finally conquer the squirrel kingdom? Or get bitten and try to be a werewolf? Wait, this isn't a thing where I'm suddenly crushing on the weirdest possible person, is it?"

"Nope, just puberty."

Nikki blinked. "...puberty?"

"Yep."

"...what makes you say that?"

Max inhaled slowly. "Basically you spent all day thinking you were dying, and then it turned out you were just having your first period."

"...Huh." Nikki considered this for a moment. "Wow. You know, given what we go through usually, that makes total sense and is also kind of disappointing."

"You're not weirded out?"

She gave him a flat look. "Max, my reaction to seeing my own mother banging Neil's dad on stage was to cheer her on. Natural stuff is just nature. Wolves are gorgeous creatures who work together to bring down parasite-infested deer for a meal. Honestly, the only thing that bugs me about this is the fact I'm twelve, but kids are maturing more and more quickly these days so meh."

After a moment, Max nodded. "Figures you'd take it well. But, you know, stable points and the whole 'thought I was dying' thing, you know..."

"Yeah, that would be a problem. Is Gwen Awake? I might need to borrow some of her pills."

2.6 Masterweaver

"...so it turns out baseline, David didn't even realize Jasper was dead at all."

"Wow, that's..." Nikki shook her head. "That's messed up."

"Yep, another great result of the legacy of Cameron Campbell."

Neil shrugged. "Well, at least we won't have to deal with that nonsense while David's Awake, since he already knows and all."

The three of them ate in silence for a minute.

"...He... does know, right?" Nikki asked. "I mean, we did tell him Jasper was a ghost, didn't we?"

The two boys blinked.

They shared a look.

"Nikki, I thought you told him," Neil managed.

"What, me? No way! He wouldn't believe me. I thought Max told him!"

"What? No! Can you picture how he'd react?" Max pointed out. "I am not dealing with weepy David more than I have to."

"Well, I didn't tell him," Neil said flatly. "I mean, I... it never came up."

"...Shit." Max put his head in his hands. "And he'll eventually find out anyway, with a variant or seeing the hub records or just visiting

Spooky Island... I'm going to have to tell him, aren't I?"

"...Yeah, there's no way not telling him will end well," Nikki agreed.

"Ugh. Well... Gwen's Awake. Go find her and tell her to prepare, like, four times the amount of ice cream he needed after the breakup."

Nikki saluted. "Will do, captain!"

"Neil, you... do your thing, I guess." Max hopped off the bench. "I have a soul to crush, and for once I don't want to."

"Don't worry, Max," Neil assured him. "I'm sure you'll go back to your usual soul-crushing in no time."

2.2 (con't) Black Omochao

[Fairy Musketeers/Camp Camp]

“So, what’s the deal with that girl?” Max subtly questioned the visiting Looper while David was busy showing the flag to the new campers (along with Ringo).

Souta gave the local Anchor a look of brief surprise before answering. “That’s Gretel, she’s from Fandavale in my Baseline.”

“Gretel? What, does she have a brother named ‘Hansel?’” Max questioned in a semi-sarcastic tone.

Souta blinked. “Um, yes.”

“…Yeah that figures,” the local sighed with a roll of his eyes.

Souta still looked confused but decided to continue explaining. “The thing is, Gretel isn’t actually a bad person, but her brother is being controlled by Cendrillon– “

Max halted Souta's explanation with a raise of his hand. "Dude, we don't have time for a backstory. Is she dangerous, or not?"

The visiting Looper looked considerate for a moment, glancing in the direction of the other campers while David saluted the flag, taking note of the way Gretel seemed to be surveying her surroundings.

"…Yes, she is dangerous," the brown-haired boy reluctantly admitted. "She has magical powers at least on par with the Musketeers, and a large sword she can summon. Though normally she's here to kidnap me for Cendrillon, I have no idea why she would be looking for Mr. Campbell…"

"Well, that is if that magical-alternate world of yours even exists this Loop, maybe she or someone she knows just got screwed over by the guy," Max scoffed. "Wouldn't surprise me." He narrowed his eyes slightly in Gretel's direction; she seemed to notice and narrowed hers back at him. "But I'll be sure to keep an eye on her."

"I suppose that's all we really can do." Souta sighed, despite wanting to help Gretel if possible, he had to admit there wasn't much to be done now. He also didn't know if *this* Gretel was anything like the Gretel he knew. He didn't even know if 'Erika' was an alias like in his Baseline…

"Souta! What are you doing over there? Come on!" Ringo called over from the group that was now entering the mess hall.

"Sorry, coming!" Souta called back as he ran after them.

Max shook his head before following, at a slower pace.

The next series of events was pretty much chaos, though from Max's point of view it was all par for the course: stepping into the mess hall, finding the other campers in a frenzy, with Gwen at the brink of a breakdown. However, it was when Cameron Campbell himself made his appearance that something… different happened.

“Cameron Campbell… so you have shown yourself.” Gretel spoke dangerously as she stepped forward.

The man looked a bit confused. “Um… why are you looking at me like that, little girl?” The older man looked towards David for clarification.

The counselor just smiled. “Well you see sir, Erika here was just so excited to come and meet you, she was so disappointed when she found out you weren’t here. But now you are! Oh, isn’t this great!?”

As David spoke, Campbell kept his eyes on ‘Erika,’ noting her aggressive stance and narrowing eyes.

“Well… great! Always nice to see a camper that truly admires what I do to make this camp what it is.” The con-artist tried to smile, but seemed a bit uneasy.

“And what exactly would that be?” Gwen asked skeptically but was ignored.

“Psst, why’s Erika staring at the old guy so much?” Nikki whispered to Ringo.

“Don’t talk to me,” Ringo grunted in response.

Nikki stared at her for a moment, before shrugging and looking back towards the three adults. “Hey, this is ‘Adventure Camp,’ right?”

“Did you really think you could get away with it…?” Gretel spoke up, interrupting any response from being formed.

“Erika?” David looked concerned, finally noticing how the new camper was visibly in a *very* bad mood.

“Um… get away with it?” Cameron Campbell questioned, sweating a bit, no doubt going over any number of ‘its’ she could be referring to.

“Max, I have a bad feeling about this,” Souta whispered to his fellow Anchor.

Max rolled his eyes. “Really? *No shit*.”

“Did you really think you could steal from Lady Cendrillon with no repercussions!?” Gretel growled as she took another step forward.

This comment seemed to shock the owner of the camp. “L-Lady Cendrillon? W-Why, who’s that… sounds like a made-up character from a fairy tale, or something, right? Right, Davey? Grace?” Campbell nervously spoke as he looked to the tow counselors.

“It’s Gwen, sir,” the female counselor sighed.

“Well I think it sounds like a lovely name, though I can’t say I’ve ever heard it before,” David said with a smile.

Gretel didn’t seem satisfied with this response.

2.7 Mighty TAB X

"That goes here, and she goes-" Gwen said as she was placing pictures on the wall, before David and Max barged in.

"Gwen, you need to stop!" David yelled as Gwen tried to hide her work.

"What are you guys talking about?" She asked.

Max simply moved her over, revealing a long and complex chart.

"...Ok, I know it looks bad, and before I explain myself, why is Max here?" Gwen asked.

"Because your 'Matchmaker Chart' has me on it," he explained with a glare. "And we both know I do the manipulating around here."

"Gwen, I thought the night taught you not to try and mess with the kids' love life," David said sternly.

"I know, but I have it all figured out this time! Neil gets next to Erin as a textbook 'appears'. They both comment on on it and hit off! Then make sure Tabii and Snake have the locked in a room scenario happen to them. I have Sasha and Edward get the wrong invitation and go to spooky island by mistake, then they become attracted to each other's survival skills. Neris and Harrison don't even need me, they already have enough sexual tension. And don't think I haven't caught those photos, Max," she said to the blushing yet angry boy. "The only thing left is Ered and Nerf. If I can just-"

She was cut off by David. "Ok, you really need to stop," he pleaded. "This won't end well."

"Oh please, what could possibly go wrong?"

Everyone stayed silent for a few seconds.

"Fuck, I said it!"

2.8 ThanatosTiger

Gwen rubbed her temples as she faced the campers.

“Alright kids, Campbell’s gone today, probably off committing tax evasion, and David’s still stuck at Super Guantanamo for Campbell’s crimes. I’m gonna need you shitheads to not do anything crazy. You all know your activities, so go ahead and do them. I’ll be here if you need me.”

“Now Gwen, that’s no way to start the day. Let’s run to the activities field, everyone! First one there gets supervised playtime with my handcuffs!”

“David, I can’t just--wait, David, you’re here! Screw you little shits, I’m going on my first break in weeks!”

Gwen ran off to the counselor's dorm fast as she could, cheering loudly all the way.

Max walked up to David, smirking. "Now that you’re here, I’m gonna share some of my revenge plans for Cameron. You can add suggestions, but don’t make them too stupid.”

“I’m not sure if I want revenge on Cameron, Max.”

“What!? The guy literally sends you to prison and you’re still defending him? I can’t believe you!”

“Cameron Campbell is a crook, Max, but I can’t go chasing after him while you campers are stuck here with only one counselor. Besides, I’m only here because the Millers let me come here for good behavior. I can’t break my parole without ending up back at Super Guantanamo for a crime I actually committed.”

“Okay, So you’re no longer on his side. Why don’t you want revenge? You beat the shit out of Bonquisha’s boyfriend for far less.”

“Honestly, Max. I’m not sure. I think I still might see him as a good person deep deep deep down, after everything he’s done. I want to forgive and forget, be the bigger person, and help him become the person I imagined him to be, even if it makes me a hypocrite. But I also want to throw that part of me away, forget what he was and do what I probably should do. Beat the shit out of him, and forget that I saw the man as my father.”

Max stared at David, not sure how to respond.

“I don’t know what I want yet, Max. Give some time to figure it out. I’m pretty sure it might not be the one you want.”

2.9 Mighty TAB X

"Hey Nikki! Could you come here for a second?" Gwen called out.

"What's up?" Nikki asked.

"So you know how I gave you the period talk in baseline?" Gwen asked.

"Yeah! I can bleed without worry! Perfect for Vampire bait. I just have to find a variant of those ... " Nikki trailed off.

"Gonna let David worry about that last bit," Gwen mumbled. "So in a variant, did I ever tell you about... sex?" She asked.

"Gwen," Nikki replied in a deadpan tone and expression. "I cheered on my mom as she fucked Carl." Neil, who walked by at the moment, prepared to run to the toilet and vomit about the memories.

"Oh ... right. I can't believe I forgot about that one. So, you don't have any questions about puberty or anything sexual related." Gwen asked to make sure.

"Well ... I do have an 'attraction'," she air quoted, causing Gwen to grin. "...but Max told me to ask David about that stuff, since you have something about a 'shipping issue.'" Gwen frowned.

2.10 Masterweaver

Breakfast at Camp Campbell was, as usual, not remarkable. Max ate his food with no real concern.

"...Soooooooooooooo." Gwen looked at him flatly. "You're not going to say anything?"

"About what?"

"That last expansion. With Graggle."

"Nah."

Gwen nodded. "Good."

"...You know, it's female angler fish that have the bioluminescent organ," Neil mused.

"Maybe Graggle's genderfluid?" Nikki suggested.

"I mean, the quartermaster did call him an it," Max allowed. "And he would know, wouldn't he?"

Gwen dragged a hand down her face. "Right, whatever. What about you, David, you've got anything to say about that?"

"You're an adult and I respect your decisions, so long as it's safe, sane, and consensual."

"Nobody's going to rag on me for falling in love with a fish monster."

"It's just too easy," Max replied with a shrug.

2.2 (con't) Black Omochao

[Fairy Musketeers/Camp Camp]

“Hmm…”

“What’s with that look Harrison?” Nerris questioned the magician boy, stopping her attempt to throw dice at him.

“I’m not sure, I feel some sort of… ominous power,” Harrison answered with a dark look.

The fantasy-loving girl snorted. “Yeah right, if there was some ‘ominous power’ on the rise, I’d be the first to know.”

Before the boy could respond, both campers spotted the Quartermaster walking by, dragging a large suitcase behind him.

“Quartermaster? Where are you going?”

“Out of here, shit’s ‘bout ta hit the fan,” the hook-handed man answered simply.

“Um, what do you mean by that?” Harrison questioned nervously.

The Quartermaster raised his hook-hand to answer, only for a loud screech to echo through the camp, cutting him off.

“Oh… darn too late, nightmarians are here,” the bearded man stated, his tone unchanging.

Harrison and Nerris both glanced to each other with equal amounts of confusion.

Nerris decided to speak up, “Um, nightmare-whats--?”

Quartermaster’s eyes twitched, before he grabbed hold of both kids by the collars of their shirts. “THIS IS YOU YOUNGINS' FAULT! THE WORLDS WERE SEPARATED FOR A REASON! BUT YOU HAD TO TAMPER WITH FORCES YOU COULDN’T COMPREHEND! NOW WE’RE ALL GONNA DIE!”

“What are you talking about!?” Nerris questioned dizzily as she was shaken.

“I am really frightened now, but I’m not sure what to be frightened off…” Harrison muttered in an equally dizzy state.

“GIANT SPIDERS!” Space Kid shouted as he ran by.

“Yes, giant spiders are something to be afraid of, I suppose,” the young magician admitted, too dizzy to notice as a large shadow loomed over the Quartermaster, who dropped them.

“Well, so much for packing. I’m out’a here,” the gray-bearded man grunted before speeding off.

Harrison and Nerris both took a moment to regain their footing, before looking up… at a giant spider looking down at them menacingly, with… button-eyes?

“…Well, now I know what that ominous feeling was,” Harrison muttered stiffly.

“Yeah… I believe you now…” Nerris nodded.

They stared for a moment longer... then the two screamed and started running, the spider nightmarian roared as it rampaged after them.

Around the camp more of the spider nightmarians rampaged, terrifying campers and tearing apart the camp. Near some of the broken remains of the mess hall the camp counselors, along with Souta, Max, Ringo, and Neil took cover.

“Giant spiders attacking the camp!? The hell is going on!?” Neil cried out as he ducked for cover. “I wanted Science Camp! Not… not… I don’t know what the fuck you’d call this!”

“Now everyone, everything is going to be okay, don’t you worry,” David assured, though his smile was forced, and he seemed to be straining to speak. “Gwen, you agree, right? Gwen?” He desperately looked towards his fellow camp counselor.

“This is not happening, it’s all a nightmare, it’s not real,” Gwen muttered to herself as she huddled in a ball, tugging at her own hair madly.

“Um, Gwen…?” David’s grin started to crack as one of the spider nightmarians crept by, luckily missing them as it continued on its way.

“Woo! Now this is Adventure Camp!” Nikki cheered as she pranced around in the open nearby, dodging a swipe from one of the spiders.

David’s eyes widened. “Nikki! You get back here! Come on Gwen, we need to go make sure the other campers are safe.” He grabbed hold of Gwen’s arm and pulled her up, despite her state. “Mr. Campbell is probably making sure most of them are safe, but we should still make sure!”

“David, he ran off, with ‘Erika’ tailing him,” Max pointed out. “You know, the one that summoned the monsters!”

David looked down at the local Anchor with a frown. “Max, I don’t know where you got the idea that Erika was responsible for the appearance of this strange fauna– “

“SHE FUCKING SHOUTED THAT CAMPBELL WOULD FACE HER WRATH RIGHT BEFORE THEY APPEARED!”

“–and I assure you, Mr. Campbell most definitely doing everything in his power ensure the safety of both the camp and campers, just have a little faith.”

“Maybe you have too much faith,” Max muttered to himself with a sigh. “Well… I guess we should make sure nobody dies…”

“That’s the spirit, Max!” David cheered.

Max let out another sigh. “Shut up.”

“Nightmarians, she really called nightmarians,” Souta muttered from nearby, a shaking Ringo beside him. “What is her plan…? Why did she start this when she spotted Mr. Campbell…?”

“Souta, stop mumbling, we need to find a way out of here,” Ringo hissed. Though her body was still shaking, she tried to appear confident for her friend.

Souta gave her a soft smile. However a screech alerted them that a spider nightmarian was headed their way, Ringo let out a gasp of fear as the large arachnid traveled towards them. Souta narrowed his eyes as he stood up.

“Souta…?”

“Sorry Ringo, I can’t run away, I have a duty to put a stop to these things…” Souta said calmly.

A soft glow starting to emit from his body. Ringo could only stare with a mesmerized expression. The spider nightmarian got closer and closer until it was right above the two children. Souta kept his footing firm as he stood protectively in front of Ringo.

“Zukyun!” a familiar voice suddenly chimed through the air.

Souta’s eyes widened as the glowing faded from his body, he looked up.

“Akazukin!” he called out at the sight of his friend from Fandavale, sailing through the air with the blades of Grim Tailor in hand.

“Hi Souta!” the red-clad musketeer waved, before she landed on the back of a spider nightmarian, digging her blades into its body. The beast of an arachnid let out a screech of pain as it thrashed about in an attempt to remove the blades from its abdomen.

“…What?” Ringo blinked with a confused expression.

Souta smiled fondly as he watched Akazukin soundly beat the nightmarian, the body of which dissolving into an array of sparkles.

“Hey, Souta!” Akazukin waved again. “I’m wide Awake and feeling Loopy!”

“Good to hear, Akazukin,” Souta nodded gratefully.

Ringo glanced between the two with her eye twitching a little. “… Really, somebody please explain what is going on here.”

“Souta, Ringo!” David called out as he approached them, Max and Neil not far behind. “Oh good, you two are safe! And, um…” the male camp counselor grew a puzzled expression when he spotted the 10-year-old Akazukin. “Who might you be, young lady?”

“I’m Akazukin! Zukyun!” the age-regressed musketeer cheered as she waved Grim Tailor around.

David winced at the sight of sharp weapons in a child’s possession, though due to the looming threat of giant spiders, he decided not to focus on that at the moment. “Akazukin…? Well… I don’t recall seeing you come to camp…”

“Um, the spiders!” Neil spoke up, pointing towards a group of three nightmarians now headed their way.

“Oh dear, Gwen! Nikki! Come on! We’re out of here!” David called out.

“Oh man.” Nikki gave a disappointed sigh as she joined the retreating party, tossing part of a spider nightmarian limb to the ground, which dissolved into sparkles.

David physically pulled the still near-comatose Gwen along. “This is not real, no giant spiders, or crazy campers… why won’t the nightmares stop!?”

“There, there, Gwen, it’ll be alright,” David tried to calm the raving Gwen.

“Well, I’ll admit this went to shit even faster than I was expecting,” Max commented as he walked beside Souta, who smiled.

“Don’t worry, Akazukin’s here now, so Val and the other two musketeers won’t be far behind,” the Key to Erde assured.

Max stared at him blankly before groaning. “Yeah, three musketeers, sure, why not…”

“Musketeers! Zukyun!” Akazukin cheered from the tail of the group.

Max let out a louder groan.

2.11 ThanatosTiger

“Quiet boy! I know a lapdog when I see one.”

Normally, Max wouldn’t pay any attention to the conversations in Baseline. He heard them once and it was more than enough. This time, he would make an exception.

“What? That’s preposterous. Max and I are a team!”

“Neil’s right! He builds the bombs, I plot out where they go, and Nikki charms a bird into dropping it on the counselor’s office. We’re a team.”

“Oh, my dear lad. I’m sure that your friends made paltry contributions to your plan, but you set it up in the first place. You have the skill to become a successful businessman like myself, but you need to recognize the difference between leaders and followers, and how to manipulate your followers into never betraying you!”

“So if I start using people like you did, I’ll end up on the leash of the federal government while hiding anything that will unravel the lies I told them.”

“That is all David’s fault!”

Signaling towards Neil about the radio, Max began his coup de grace.

“So David hid the body of Jasper? So David made the deals with Russia and Thailand and North Korea and Kentucky?”

“He may as well have! I may have committed those crimes, every single one, but none of that would have happened if I hadn’t taken advice from a ten-year-old!”

One of the Miller’s voices spoke from the radio, the voice drier than a desert. “I don’t know Mr. Campbell. I’d say that there are quite a few ten-year-olds smarter than you are.”

Campbell bellowed in fear, throwing off his shirt and ascot as he ran into the woods.

“Wow, I’m actually *disappointed* how easy that was.” Max snarked. “Hey, Samboy’s dessert is free, let’s split it between you, me and Nikki.”

2.12 Mighty TAB X

Gwen approached Max as he was watching a horror movie on his phone. "Max, buddy, how’s it going. You doing good? Great!"

Max paused his video as he looked boredly at Gwen. "Cut the bullshit. What the fuck do you want?"

"Ok, so according to what I know, Anchors loop the most and the longest, right?"

"Yeah, I've got a couple hundred years under my belt." He replied.

"So you also have the most fused loops, right?" she asked with a mysterious glint in her eyes.

"... where the hell are you going with this?" he asked.

"Do you happen to, I don't know, have a way to enhance a curse to keep going even with true love’s kiss?" she asked in an excited tone.

"... This is about the fish isn't it?" She nodded. "Gwen! You should know that's not the morally right thing! You should respect if a person wants to be normal, and love them for who they are on the inside."

Gwen frowned. "Now who's the one bullshiting here?" she deadpanned.

"Giving you a taste of your own David performance. It's creepy when it's not him, that's the real life lesson. Anyway, if you want something like that, you better offer something pretty hefty," he said with a grin.

"I can give you some illegal fireworks," she bargained.

"Please, Neil can make much more explosive stuff than that. Give me something good," he said expectantly.

"I can give you my account access to adult websites."

"We already steal that stuff from you and David. But it was a better attempt."

"Fuck, FINE! I'll manipulate events in a long term fashion to make sure the boy-scouts are nowhere near here the next time I wake up early!" she pleaded.

"... Tempting ... deal, I'll see what I can dig up," he said, going back to blood-curdling screams on his phone.

Gwen did a little dance before getting a plan ready for her next early loop.

2.13 Mighty TAB X

"Pardon me Max, but would you mind helping me lift this giant box of candy into the trash?" asked Dolph.

"Sure thing." 'Act friendly, make sure he doesn't suspect a thing. As you dump it in, slowly but candy from the inside of the box into your pocket. Not to fast or he'll suspect something's wrong,' Max thought as they put the box into the dumpster

"Thank you, Max. Say, would you like to help me paint the Ifle tower figure I put next to the fireplace?" he asked innocently.

"Sorry, have my own thing to do. Maybe some other time Dolph." 'Don't be too mean, or we'll have a baseline repeat. Make sure to quicken the pace as you finish the rest of the box ... and done!' "Well, later!" Max said as he finished walking away. 'Now to figure out a discreet way to sell all this candy without Dolph or-' "David! Where the fuck did you come from?" he said at David's sudden appearance.

"Don't play innocent Max. Now give me the candy so I can properly dispose of it," he said with a small glare.

"I have no idea what you're talking about," Max said with a whistle.

"... Oh, Nikki!" David called out as Max paled and ran, to avoid the candy hunter.

2.14 ThanatosTiger

Subpar pillow and cot? Check.

Demo expert Mr. Honeynuts? Check.

Recently acquired comfy blanket? Check, check, & check.

Max sighed as he drifted off to sleep, mentally preparing himself for another terrible day at Camp Campbell.

“Uh, Max? Why do you have the flag wrapped around you?”

Dammit.

“It’s comfy. Go to bed.”

“It is, how? Wait, not important. Why do you, Max, have the Camp Campbell flag wrapped around your body?”

Max sighed. “Okay, fine. What Jermy did to the flag was so disgusting I decided to prevent it from happening. I was just gonna Pocket it, but it felt so soft I decided to make it my personal blanket. Now go to bed.”

“Can I use it?”

“No, get your own. Good night, Neil.”

Max flipped off Neil before happily falling asleep.

2.2 (con't) Black Omochao

[Fairy Musketeers/Camp Camp]

“Geeze, that didn’t go like I was expecting,” Cameron Campbell grunted as he tried to make as much distance between himself and the chaos that was going on at the center of camp as possible. “The police or FBI, sure, but I didn’t expect one those magic-freaks to follow me here!” He glanced back at the camp, kids screaming, buildings burning, and giant spiders crawling about. “…I should be a good enough distance away now.” He pulled up his wrist and spoke into his watch, “Come in! I need out, now! This is worse than Code: Black! This is… do we even have a code for ‘crazy magic-person

from another world sending giant spiders to attack me because I made impossible to follow-through-on promises to an evil witch?' If not, we probably should…"

"Yeah, it's Code: Don't Move!"

"Well that can't be right, a code should be–Ah! You!" Cameron gasped in surprise when he saw Gretel standing behind him, wielding a sword larger than herself, several spider nightmarians standing behind her.

"Just come quietly, Campbell. You'll make good on your debts to Lady Cendrillon! One way, or *another*…" the small girl spoke threateningly as she effortlessly waved the giant sword through the air while the spider nightmarians growled.

"Well I would be perfectly happy to go with you, small child with huge sword, but…" the old con-artist trailed off, before a helicopter flew into view and dropped down a ladder. "I'm needed elsewhere!" he smiled as he grabbed hold of the ladder, and the helicopter started moving.

Gretel looked confused for a second, but her eyes quickly widened in realization. "Don't let him get away!" she commanded the oversized spiders. They screeched and charged forward, but the helicopter quickly got out of the range of their limbs, and even their web couldn't seem to keep up. Gretel growled a bit as she charged forward, slamming her sword into the ground with the intent of using gravity magic, but the helicopter was already too far away. "NO!"

"Better luck next time, kid!" Cameron mockingly called out as the helicopter disappeared in the distance.

Gretel gripped her sword tightly as the nightmarians returned to her side. She turned her attention back to the camp, and gave a roar before charging back there.

“Okay, everyone stay calm. I’ve notified the forest ranger, and someone will be here to deal with these unusual spiders soon,” David spoke calmly to the panicking campers, and Gwen, as they hid inside the counselors’ cabin from the rampaging spiders outside.

The chaos going on in the cabin was a bit overwhelming, especially for only one camp counselor since Gwen was pretty much out of commission. Amongst the chaos was: Neil screaming about how absurd this was, Harrison having some kind of guilt related panic-attack, Nurf trying to retain his aggressive demeanor in spite of his own clear feelings of panic, Space Kid loudly cheering obliviously, and Nikki just attempting to incite more chaos into the general panic of the rest of the campers.

Aside from the chaos there was Max, Dolf, Ringo, Souta and Akazukin, all seemingly attempting to avoid getting dragged into the nonsense (with the latter two having a quiet conversation). Ered was leaning on one of the walls with her arms crossed, apparently not affected by the situation.

“How exactly are we supposed to stay calm at a time like this!?” Neil shouted from nearby, sending David a nasty glare. “There are GIANT SPIDERS outside! Completely undocumented species mind you, that could kill us at any second!” The boy clutched his head as he panicked. “I may have wanted ‘Science’ Camp but discovering new species that could possibly *kill* me wasn’t exactly what I had in mind!”

“I understand your concerns Neil, but I assure you that none of us are going to get killed,” David nodded with an assuring smile. “The forest ranger guaranteed that they’ll get right on our ‘giant spider’ problem!” the adult man paused with a thoughtful look. “Not sure why he was speaking so slowly, I suppose he just wanted to make sure I told everyone there was nothing to worry about.”

All of the panicking campers froze and gave David blank stares… before they all started panicking even more erratically.

“Dammit David,” Max sighed to himself as he stood in the corner of the room. “Wake up already…”

“Akazukin, are the other Musketeers around? Or Val? Is he Awake?” Souta questioned his Looping friend as they stood in the doorway to another room.

“Shirayuki and Ibara should be around. Val is Awake and is coming after he deals with Jed. Zukyun!”

“Hey! What are you two talking about!?” Ringo questioned suspiciously as she butted in between Souta and Akazukin.

“Hi Ringo!” Akazukin greeted obliviously.

“How do you know my name!?”

Souta chuckled a bit as Ringo grabbed hold of a giggling Akazukin and shook her.

“None of this is real. None of this is happening. None of it!” Gwen chanted to herself as she stayed huddled under the desk.

“Everyone! Please calm down–OUCH!” David’s second attempt to calm the panicking group was interrupted by a bite to the arm. “Nikki!?”

“Sorry, David. But in these anarchic times dominance is the key to victory,” Nikki shrugged after dropping from David’s arm, before rejoining the chaos. “THIS IS THE BEST ADVENTURE CAMP EVER!”

“I knew something bad would happen, why didn’t I do anything!?” Harrison questioned frantically as he paced around.

“Well… we didn’t really have any time before the giant spiders attacked,” Nerris stopped her panicking to point out, giving a shrug.

“Both of you nerds shut up! I will not fall below that new girl in this power struggle, and I’ll start by making sure your powers are subject to me!” Nurf shouted as he stomped over to the two magic-kids. “Seriously though, I may be putting out an outward appearance of aggression, but inside I am just as freaked out about all of this as everyone else…” the larger kid added thoughtfully, before grabbing both of them by the ears. “Now come on and help me overthrow Nikki!”

“My reign is coming, you can’t stop it!” Nikki shouted aggressively.

“I’m a throne!” Space Kid cheered as the green-haired girl stood on him.

“I need to get the fuck out of here…” Neil muttered as he tried to avoid running into any of the panicking campers, while also going over today’s events in his mind, over and over.

“Mr. David, he said a swear!” Akazukin suddenly spoke up, pointing at Neil, said boy let out a loud sound of annoyance while glaring at her.

“Where did you even come from!? You weren’t with us on the bus! You just showed up out of blue, wielding swords!” after Neil finished shouting, Akazukin stared at him blankly for a couple seconds.

“I came from… over there!” the red-clad girl explained, pointing in the direction of the door.

“Isn’t that where you *always* come from?” Souta smiled, despite Neil’s fuming.

“Zukyun!” Akazukin laughed along with Souta.

“I really want to know where you know this girl from, Souta,” Ringo grumbled in a low tone.

“Kids, I’m trying to make sure everyone got here safely!” David scolded as he looked over the room. “Let’s see… oh dear! Has anybody seen the Quartermaster!?”

“I saw him run off when all of this started,” Dolph spoke up from behind David.

“What?” the camp counselor questioned in surprise as he looked down at the boy, Dolph shrugged.

“I think he left camp. I saw him speaking with Harrison and Nerris, so maybe you could ask them for more clarification, but…” the small camper trailed off, his eyes looking to the small ‘war’ that was going on between Nurf and Nikki, mainly consisting of Nurf trying to force the reluctant Harrison and Nerris to fight Nikki and her ‘throne,’ Space Kid.

“Right…” David nodded slowly, staring as Nurf finally got fed up with the unwilling magic campers and charged towards Nikki himself, resulting in a cartoon dust cloud forming around them, Space Kid cheering as he was dragged into it. “Well… if Quartermaster is gone, we can at least assume he’s probably safe. So if everyone is accounted for, we can… wait…” David gained a quizzical look as he scanned the room.

“…David?” Dolf inquired worriedly.

“We’re still missing a camper! Where’s Erika?” David looked around worriedly but was unable to spot the silver-haired girl. “Erika? Erika!? Gwen?” he ducked his head under the desk to find his co-counselor still in a fetal position. “Gwen…?”

“Not happening. Not happening.”

“Gwen!”

“Huh? David?” the female camp counselor blinked as she came back to her senses.

“Gwen, you need to snap out of it! The kids are out of control! There are giant spiders outside! Mr. Campbell and the Quartermaster have both run off! And one of the campers is missing!” David’s shouting was enough of a shock that all the panicking campers, including the fighting Nurf and Nikki, to stop and stare at him.

Gwen let out a small groan, before nodding and getting out from under the desk. “You’re right, you’re right… I need to pull myself together, you can’t be expected to handle all of *this* by yourself.” She admitted, looking a bit guilty.

“Thank you, Gwen. And don’t worry, I’m sure if we work together we can get everything under control!” the man exclaimed, back to his usual demeanor.

“And how are you supposed to get it under control? We’re stuck at a camp nobody cares about, with an evil magic girl out there in control army of giant spiders ready to tear our flesh off!” Max pointed out frustratedly.

David looked to be about to respond, but the cabin door opened and caught his attention.

“Huzzah! Erika is back, safe and sound! Now we no longer need to worry about her being eaten,” Dolf explained with a smile.

“Erika! There you are!” the counselor exclaimed with relief at the sight of the silver-haired girl in the doorway. “Where have you been? Were you with Mr. Campbell? Is he with you?”

“No… he’s not,” Gretel spoke darkly as she stepped into the cabin, Souta and Akazukin both noticed this with widening eyes, as did Max.

“Get back you idiot!” Max shouted, pulling David away just as Gretel unveiled her sword.

“I’ve had enough distractions. I don’t care what it takes, I’m getting who I came here for and dragging him back to Lady Cendrillon!”

“What are you talking about? And where did you get that sword? You’re not supposed to have weapons here Erika, especially not swords larger than your own body,” David scolded, albeit with a baffled expression.

Max facepalmed with a loud groan as Gretel growled in aggravation.

“Shut up camp-man! This charade is over!” Gretel slammed her sword into the ground, creating a shockwave of gravity magic that shook the entire cabin.

“It’s her!” Harrison suddenly spoke up, pointing at Gretel with a terrified expression. “She’s the one that caused all of this! She has powers, powers I… don’t think I understand!” as most of the other campers’ eyes widened.

“I didn’t start this. But I’ll finish it if I have to!” the sword-wielding girl countered with a snarl as she waved her weapon threateningly at the assortment of campers.

“Giant sword? Cool…” Ered commented from her position leaning on the wall, giving a thumbs-up.

“Don’t patronize me,” Gretel growled, before looking over the assortment of people in front of her. “Now…” she snapped her fingers, suddenly all the walls of the cabin ruptured as a quartet of spider nightmarians burst through them, surrounding the humans with clear intent to kill. “It’s in your best interests to… cooperate, if you want to keep all your flesh!”

“David… where the *fuck* did this kid come from?” Gwen asked the other adult slowly, David scratched his head nervously.

“The bus, with the other new campers… but I really have no idea where all of *this* is coming from!”

“Akazukin?” Souta whispered to the musketeer with a serious look, she nodded as she held up Grim Tailor readily.

“Zukyun!”

2.15 ThanatosTiger

Chalchiuhtlicue typed as fast as she could, hoping to settle the problem with one of her loopers. There was something in Nikki’s code that caused her to become sick when outside of nature. She was hoping she would able to solve it before Yggdrasil put her into a sci-fi setting, or worse. Checking her monitor to see how it was going, she was surprised to see how well it was behaving. She half expected it to turn Nikki into a robot. Typing in the last bit, she checked her monitor once more to see how the patch worked. Seeing nothing to worry about, she typed y, then entered her loop.

Nikki dug into the dirt of Camp Campbell, preparing for city travel. She couldn’t handle being outside the woods without looking like a vampire. And not the cool vampire that sucked blood and turned into animals, or sold chocolate cereal. Stuffing the last bit of dirt into a sack, she headed towards the bus, ready for the day.

“Nikki, may I speak with you?”

“Huh, oh Chalkicutie, it’s you!”

“Yes, Nikki. Anyway, I came to inform you that I fixed your code. You should be able to leave Camp Campbell with no issue.

“Thanks Chalkacutie! Can you fix the other thing that makes feel like I’m dying?”

“Ah, no. There are a few branches that have something to help with that.”

“Ok, I’ll go tell Max about me being able to survive outside of Camp Campbell.”

As Nikki ran towards the bus, Chalchiuhtlicue decided to disappear as well, content with how the loop was going.

“So since I’m cured, what are we gonna do in the city? I wanna hit the food trucks again,” Nikki said.

“Neilbucks are doing well so far, you could probably eat all the tapas and not worry about payment,” Neil stated.

“Guys, c’mon, aside from leaving David, we hardly did anything in baseline. Let’s do something completely nuts,” Max declared.

“I know, we can steal a food truck. We’ll take turns driving while the other two eat!”

“I was able to borrow some artificial limbs from the RWBY Branch, if I connect it to a computer, I could program them to drive for us instead. That way everyone can eat.”

“Huh, would David’s phone work?” Max asked.

“Yes.”

“Alright, let’s head out.”

The trio snuck off as soon as David’s back was turned, running as fast as they could. As soon as they saw the food trucks, Neil pulled out the limbs, and Max handed him the phone.

“A few tweaks, and done! The two are now connected!

“Alright, let’s break in the one with the ice cream!”

Max picked the lock, then opened the back door. Nikki charged in, tackling the cook. While she dealt with the sole employee, Max and Neil set up the limbs. Two hands on the steering wheel, one foot on the gas pedal. Neil turned the ignition, then jumped out of the driver's seat.

"Wait, wouldn't you need someone to monitor the road?" Max asked.

"Dammit! Save me some ice cream, I'll drive!"

"I'll do my best."

Max ran to the back door, where Nikki was beating up the food truck guy as he tried to call security. Stealing the walkie-talkie from him, he jumped in, gesturing to Nikki to do the same. As soon as she jumped in he slammed the door shut. Not a moment to soon the food truck rushed out, sending Max and Nikki to the floor. The truck then slowed to a manageable speed, and Max and Nikki got up. Max took a few ice creams from the freezer while Nikki devoured as much as she could. Max Pocketed two ice cream sandwiches, then reclined on the floor. Today was a good day in the city.

"Max, David's phone is about to die, I'm gonna have to pull over!" Neil yelled from the front seat.

Goddammit.

2.16 ThanatosTiger

[Camp Camp/Red vs Blue]

"Good morning Camp Campbelliens! In a matter of hours, your flag shall be repossessed by the glorious Red Wood Scouts!" Pikeman called from atop the flagpole.

“Ugh, this shit again? We’ve beaten you so many times it’s honestly starting to feel cruel.” Max looked up, then noticed something was off this loop. “Hey, where’s Jermy?”

“Our comrade is currently receiving extra training from Colonel Sarge. Once we are free, we shall inform our commanding officer of our victory in apprehending the Camp Campbell flag. Victory for the Red Wood Scouts!”

“Wait, hold up, how did you ‘defeat us?’ You just took our flag. Annoying, but not that big of a deal.”

“Hah, a foolish attempt to deny your humiliating loss. The seizing of your flag has brought us victory, and you blue devils are now under the control of the great Red Wood Scouts!” Pikeman yelled, drawing attention from the rest of the camp. “I’ll be sure to earn my next badge for this successful operation.”

Max noticed Billy was about to brag about his portion of the failure, and possibly start another question and answer session about glory under the Wood Scouts, and interrupted him with a loud “Shut Up!” Max then began ranting his head off

“You dumbasses tried to steal our platypus, then tried to kill it, cocked up on both of plans, and then got tied up trying to steal our flag! The only thing you succeeded at was fucking with our activities center, and no one gives a shit about that! You accomplished nothing, you fucking failed!”

“Congratulations on successfully retrieving the blue devils’ flag, gentleman!” a man’s voice cried from a few feet away.

“GOD FUCKING DAMMIT!”

The man stepped up the flagpole, then sliced the Wood Scouts free from the rope. “Excellent work, men. I’ve never seen a retrieval go so well in all my years. Report back to base with the flag, where Robo-

Jermy 3.0 will tie it to our automatic water pistol guarded flagpole. Let’s see these blue devils try to snatch it back now!”

Max sighed, done for the day, “You know what, screw this, I’m going to hang out in the middle of the woods until the loop ends.”

Max then retreated, Nikki following soon after. Neil opted to run after the Wood Scouts leader, hoping to see what ‘Robo-Jermy 3.0 was about.

2.17 ThanatosTiger

Max walked towards the bus, dreading what he was about to say. Camp Campbell was shutting down and everyone was leaving except for him and David. He raised as much hell as he could with his friends, but it was delaying the inevitable. It was time to do what he should have done in baseline.

“Look, guys, I know you’re leaving to another camp, and I’m not gonna see you for some time. Sure, we live in the late tens, but the only one who has a phone he didn’t steal is Neil. I don’t wanna see you leave, but you guys are going to an actual camp you like. I shouldn’t be selfish and demand you guys spend time in a broken down piece of shit like this one. Goodbye guys, I’ll miss you.” Max hugged his two best friends, glad to get that before the next loop.

“Uh, Max, we’re not leaving, we’re gonna stay to mess with David,” Nikki said.

“What!”

“Yeah, didn’t you notice we weren’t wearing our packs?” Neil asked.

“I, uh...”

“And didn’t you get our pings? We sent them two weeks before everyone left.” Neil added.

“Alright! I’m an idiot when I get all mushy. Let’s blow David up with fireworks or something.”

“You know, Gwen did leave and hated it. Why not be kind to her and mess up her workplace?” Nikki asked.

“Yeah, she did hate having nothing to do. Though I’m surprised she didn’t use her time to write bad slashfic.”

“Eh, Gwen’s an idiot. Time to head out guys, bring everything you can think of.”

“Alright,” Nikki cheered. Nikki then began shoving dirt into a small sack.

“I thought you didn’t need that stuff anymore?” Max asked.

“Nah, it’s for the carpet. People hate vacuuming.”

2.18 Masterweaver

[Camp Camp][RWBY]

"Okay, break up the hugwrestling," Yang said dryly.

"But it's been so long since I've seen Nikki!" Ruby whined, pulling the greenette's arm behind her. "I need to express my affection and assert my dominance again!"

"Yeah!" Nikki agreed, sinking her teeth into Ruby's shoulder. "Thith ith juth frienly thparrin!"

Blake rolled her eyes, turning to Neil. "So how have you been handling the loops?"

"It's still... kind of weird to think about," Neil admitted, "but, well... I'm not freaking out. That much. Anymore."

Weiss pulled out a pencil and flipped open a notebook. "I see..."

"Oh, ha ha, very funny." Neil rolled his eyes. "I don't need your therapy, miss 'how many laws of physics did I just break.'"

"Of course not," Weiss agreed, writing a few things down. "I am merely writing down some lines for my songs. On an unrelated note, do you have any new loopers?"

"Oh, yeah, David and Gwen started looping."

Ruby's head shot up from the tangled mess of her and Nikki. "The counselors are looping?! Ohmygosh that's awesome!"

"I mean, yeah," Nikki agreed, "but it's also like... kind of weird? Because nobody's sure if they should treat us like kids." She glanced down at herself. "Also, your foot is in my armpit."

"And it will stay there until you declare me alpha."

"Never!"

Yang chuckled as the bus rolled to a stop. "Seriously, girls. The bus is too cramped for this, you should wait until we head out to the camp."

"And honestly," Blake pointed out, "Ruby does lead a quartet of trained warriors to fight shadow demons, which does make her talented in both woodland survival and general combat."

"Not to mention the idea of alpha wolves are based on faulty research involving captive wolves pulled away from their families," Weiss added.

"Nikki, I respect your skills at survival," Neil said as he maneuvered around the brawl, "but you reeeeeeally need to learn when to fold."

Nikki frowned and tapped the ground twice with a sigh of resignation. "I'll beat you one day, Ruby Rose."

"Maybe," Ruby allowed. "If you took on my unawake self before the fall of Beacon and managed to get Crescent Rose away, probably. But not today."

"Kids are here," the Quartermaster said flatly as he stepped off the bus. "Goin' on my break. Good luck."

"Well hello there new campers!" David's smile was slightly strained as he counted the number of people coming out of the bus. "Oh. Ah..."

"You seem thrown for a loop there," Ruby said casually. "I'm pretty good at anchoring people."

"Oh! Loopers, right." David rubbed the back of his head. "Sorry, there was... a lot that happened in our last expansion, and I'm still trying to figure all that in with the whole looping thing."

"Not a problem." Ruby held out a fist. "Hey Max!"

"Sup, Ruby." The boy pounded the fist with a roll of his eyes. "You been keeping up to date?"

"Caught the season 3 finale last hub loop. Oh, but if you want me to stop, that's fine too--the RvB loopers and us have an agreement to not watch hub records without each other, cause, you know, drama."

"...We'll talk about it later."

"Hey David!" Nikki gestured at the others. "These are the RWBY loopers, the ones that told us about the loops."

"Some of them," Weiss clarified. "There are... quite a number of us that these three haven't met."

"We did meet Cinder and Emerald," Max pointed out.

"Yes, Cinder had quite a bit to say about that..."

"Well, here at Camp Campbell, we're ready to welcome any new camper that--"

"David, let me cut you off there," Yang said. "Just want to clarify a few things. In our baseline we're actually five to six years older than our current physical bodies, and we're training to become warriors with dangerous weapons that fight a horde of shadow monsters, and also this isn't technically baseline but Blake and I are engaged."

Blake cleared her throat. "Yang--"

"So just to be clear: Don't talk down to us, don't think you need to protect us from wild animals, and while Blake and I will *not* engage in sexual activities out of respect of our physical age we are perfectly likely to engage in outrageous flirtation and some cuddling. You remember those ground rules, and we'll be perfectly happy to act like and or be the little girls we appear to be at the moment."

Blake rolled her eyes with a wry smile. "Seriously, we are looking forward to having a fun time, Yang just... likes to establish these things."

"Right." David took a breath, and regained his smile. "Alright, then, new campers! Gwen's Awake, but she's still handling the rest of the kids. So let's get you settled in."

2.2 (con't) Black Omochao

[Fairy Musketeers/Camp Camp]

“Now, I’m going to give you all until the count of three to tell me–" Gretel started to speak but found herself being charged at by a blade-wielding Akazukin. “One of the Three Musketeers!?”

“Musketeers, yah!” Akazukin cheered, her weapons clashing with Gretel’s sword. “Did you think King Fernando wouldn’t be wise to Cendrillon’s plots? We won’t let you take Souta!”

“Why you–Souta?” Gretel blinked in confusion, giving Akazukin a momentary advantage where she knocked her to the ground. The silver-haired girl growled, her moment of confusion forgotten. “Nightmarians! Attack!”

“Oh god! We’re gonna die!” Neil shouted among the other panicking campers as the spiders began to close in on them.

“Everyone calm down, and, um… make yourselves look big!” David suggested, trying to hide his fear. “Remember, they’re more afraid of you than you are of them!”

“Yeah, somehow I seriously doubt that,” Max commented sarcastically as the dripping maws of the spider nightmarians loomed ever closer.

“It can’t end like this! Not here!” Gwen fell back into a state of panic.

“Bring it on you unruly arachnids!” Nikki laughed crazily in the face of the dangerous beasts.

“S-Souta…” Ringo stuttered fearfully as she stuck by her friend’s side.

“Yeah, Ringo?” the boy questioned with an unsure expression, mentally debating if he should get rid of the nightmarians himself and assist Akazukin against Gretel.

“I-If we’re going to d-die… there’s something I need to tell– “

“Get out of my way you beasts!” a male voice shouted, interrupting Ringo’s attempted confession, as a silver-blue form came soaring through the air, slashing through several of the nightmarians and landing next to Nikki. The wolf stood firmly, glaring at the remaining nightmarians around as the ones he defeated dissipated into sparkles. “Harming kids is going too far, even for creatures like you!”

“Yeah, Val!” Akazukin cheered, despite still being in a sword-struggle with Gretel.

“Sorry we’re late, Akazukin. There were some… complications with the portal,” Val spoke with an aside glance, coughing a bit.

“I… what…?” Ringo looked stunned, barely able to process what had just happened.

Souta gave a relieved sigh as it seemed she had forgotten about her confession. ‘*I am **not** ready to deal her, or Shirayuki’s, feelings… especially since neither of them are Looping.*’

“Cool, a talking wolf!” Nikki exclaimed excitedly.

Val’s fur prickled. “I’M NOT A D–Wait, did you just call me a wolf?”

“Yes? You are a wolf, right?” the green-haired girl tilted her head questioningly.

“Yes… thank you.” Val sat down, a slightly embarrassed look crossing his face. “Sorry, people tend to get it wrong a lot…”

“You know, I’d question the existence of a talking canine of any type. But right now, let’s focus on the FUCKING GIANT SPIDERS THAT WANT TO EAT US!” Neil shouted, reminding Val and Nikki of the remaining nightmarians.

Most of the campers screamed as the spiders screeched.

“My spiders are *very* hungry, Akazukin. I doubt one little dog could satisfy them…” Gretel spoke evilly as she still struggled with

Akazukin.

“IT WAS JUST SAID; I’M NOT A DOG!”

“So, you best get out of my way and give me– “

“We’ll be giving you nothing!” another female voice shouted.

Gretel’s eye twitched at the new interruption, which only got worse as a wave of frost and vines incapacitated the remaining spider nightmarians.

“Wherever evil shows up, we will show up to fight it!” a ten-year-old version of Shirayuki appeared, floating through the air, a similarly aged Ibara riding on some vine into the scene.

“For we are the…” Ibara yawned a bit as she spoke but grew serious at the next part that came.

“One! Two! Three! Musketeers!” Akazukin joined in with her two friends in their cheer.

“*Of course* they are.” Max sighed with a facepalm.

“All three Musketeers…” Gretel hissed, watching as her remaining nightmarians turned to sparkles due to the other two Musketeers attacks.

“You’ve got no chance against us now, Gretel!” Akazukin grinned.

“We of the Three Musketeers never fail in our tasks, so you better just give up!” Shirayuki taunted with a flick of her wrist.

Ibara just yawned.

Gretel let out a roar as she stomped her foot, before slamming her sword into the ground, unleashing another wave of gravity magic. “That’s IT! I’m at my wit's end, enough of this nonsense! If somebody doesn’t tell me what I want to know, soon, I’m not sure what I’ll do!

Where is Cameron Campbell!?” Gretel shouted at the top of her lungs.

The Musketeers, Val, and Souta blinked in confusion.

“Cameron… Campbell…?” Shirayuki questioned slowly.

“Who…?” Ibara surprisingly looked wide-awake.

“Zukyun?” Akazukin tilted her head.

“Cameron Campbell! Where has he run to! If you don’t tell me, I’ll be forced to take drastic measures!” Gretel exclaimed aggressively. “Nobody gets away with scamming Lady Cendrillon without consequences!”

“What!?” Val and the musketeers exclaimed in befuddlement.

The Key to Erde carefully stepped towards the sword-wielding girl. “So… you’re not here to kidnap me…?” Souta asked slowly.

“Who are you!?” Gretel questioned with an irritated scowl, clearly at the end of her patience.

“Um… nobody important…” the brown-haired boy moved back to Ringo’s side.

“Mr. Campbell?” David looked confused. “Where did he run off to…?”

“That’s what *I* want to know! NOW!” Gretel snapped.

2.19 ThanatosTiger

“Hello, Daniel! How have you been? I haven’t seen you since your last visit!”

Daniel paused, confused. His kidnapping/murder plan had gone off the rails before it could even begin.

“You said you were the spiritual leader of your religion, right? Why don’t I tell you about the loops and compare it to your tales of Xemug.”

Daniel nodded, smirking. Perhaps he could turn David to his side.

“And that’s the story of when we all turned into fish for a loop. Max tried to feed me to a shark after I made a bad school pun, but it was worth it.”

Daniel was panicking inside his mind. Young Max was more dangerous than he considered. He had convinced his counselors that he was an important linchpin in the world's safety, chosen by ancient gods. Daniel knew it was ridiculous, if the world continued to repeat endlessly, he would be experiencing them thanks to his importance! If only young Max had joined his cause permanently! No time for what if’s. He had to kill the child, even if it was in such a lowly commoner way.

“Oh! The tea’s done! No need to get up, Daniel, I can get it.”

David ‘s back was turned, now was the perfect time to escape!

If only he could get up.

David set down the two cups and sat down. “Well c’mon Daniel, that tea isn’t going to drink itself.”

Well since he couldn’t get up, may as well try it.

Relief washed over David as he stared down at the passed out cultist. He’d have to buy milk tomorrow for the campers, but at least the camp was safe. He could have just left the body bind curse on,

but part of him did want to give the lactose-intolerant cultist a taste of his own medicine.

Max would probably be upset he didn’t get to use the crossbow, though.

2.20 BIOS-Pherecydes

[Camp Camp/RWBY]

Gwen sighed and stretched her back, letting out a grunt of satisfaction as the tension from having to deal with the brats she loved/hated was temporarily eased. The problem with the start of the Loop was that, for her, it usually started in the middle of a crisis. (Not that crises were atypical daily occurrences at Camp Campbell.) Luckily for her sanity, she had somewhat gotten accustomed to this particular disaster and was able to get Nerf to let Space Kid loose from the fan *without* throwing silverware. Which, while admittedly less cathartic, was more effective.

"Ok Space Kid, why don't you go meet the new campers. I'm sure they'd love to hear about... I don't know, moonrocks or something," she said while pushing him out of the Mess Hall.

"Ma'am, yes ma'am," Space Kid replied with a salute before heading off to irritate, er, greet the new kids. Instantly, Gwen whirled around to shove a finger into Nerf's face accusingly.

"As for you, I swear to god I will drag you kicking and screaming into your own personal hell if you don't knock this shit off."

Nerf scoffed. "Yeah, whatever. Research shows that corporal punishment actually increases aggressive and antisocial tendencies, so you can shove it."

Gwen leaned in closer, "Yeah, well what if I had you transferred to the Wood Scout camp, huh? I could do it. Don't fucking test me."

Nerf rolled his eyes, but Gwen noted with satisfaction that he had hesitated for a second beforehand.

The doors to the Mess Hall popped open. "Good morning Gwen! How is my favorite co-counselor doing this fine afternoon?"

Gwen sagged and turned away from Nerf, pinching the bridge of her nose. "David, it is far too early in the Loop to deal with your... you right now. I've told you before, unless the Camp is burning down or it's a Fused Loop not to bother me until at least five."

David beamed. "Well, that's just it Gwen. It *is* a Fused Loop. Why don't you come say hi to our guests?"

"Fuck. Okay, sure. Let's go. Who are they?"

"The girls who first explained everything to Max and the others, Team RWBY!" David exclaimed, throwing the doors open to reveal the four de-aged Loopers interacting with the other kids she'd kicked out of the Mess Hall.

"—actually prefer 'Othello' to 'Romeo and Juliet.' While both are classic examples of tragedy and have broadly similar themes, the latter is a study in racial and cultural strife that I find easier to empathize with," Blake was saying.

Preston nodded seriously. "Of course. And that is entirely your prerogative as the audience to have a preference for thematic parallels toward which you yourself identify. That is what makes the Theatre so powerful. The ability to seamlessly interweave truth and fiction to reflect a portion of reality in such a way that one cannot help but be moved to the height of emotion."

"So you can be the Paladin who's might and power safeguards the wizard princess," Nerris exclaimed excitedly.

Yang grinned. "How about a Dragoon instead? Then we can have the dragon protecting the princess instead of kidnapping her."

Nerris gaped, "That's... brilliant! Excelsior!"

Harrison stared wide-eyed as Weiss levitated the table using the Force. "Incredible! We have to compare notes on our magical studies. It's so nice to have another practitioner join the camp."

Weiss hmm'ed. "I suppose it wouldn't hurt to take on a new padawan for a Loop."

"—reduce the coefficient of friction over the total surface area by a factor of four allowing an increase in carrying capacity and a decrease in fuel requirements. That will allow us to more easily start a moon base we can use as a waypoint for expanding into the solar system."

Space Kid stared at Ruby with a dumbstruck expression. "I think I love you."

Gwen moaned in despair. "Oh god. Fucking Loopers. I'm getting shenanigan flashbacks."

Later, after managing to distract the banes of her existence with promises of jello if they left her alone for a few hours, Gwen sagged in her chair. "And then they fucked. The end."

Pushing back her newest masterpiece, she stood and grabbed a new cup of coffee. When she turned back, Ruby was standing in the middle of the room. "GAH! Holy shit, don't do that!"

Ruby winced at the mess and rubbed the back of her head sheepishly. "Sorry."

"Ugh. It's fine. It happens. Did you need something?"

Ruby nodded seriously. "We need to talk."

Gwen's eyebrow rose curiously. "Okaaay. About what?"

"Shipping."

Instantly Gwen's skepticism was replaced with enthusiasm. "Well, why didn't you say so? I'm pretty darn good at matchmaking if I do say so my—"

Ruby shot forward and put her hand over Gwen's face. "Nuh-uh. I talk, you listen," she said with a stern look.

Gwen blinked, before nodding cautiously.

Ruby stepped back (and returned to ground level, seeing as she was considerably shorter this Loop than usual and Gwen was tall). "I saw the episode with the dance."

Gwen winced. "Okay, yeah, that wasn't my best showing, but in my defen—" She shut up as Ruby crossed her arms.

Once Gwen was quiet again, Ruby continued. "Shipping is serious business. You're not just throwing together two cardboard cutouts to see if they fit, you're deciding the future! A good Ship will last for years, at least, and determine the course of the entire next generation. You need to be sure their likes are compatible, their dislikes, their hopes and dreams, their personalities, their histories, their sexual orientation and compatibility. You need to understand them as good, or better, than you do yourself so that you can decide if they should be together forever."

"Uh."

"You can't just push two people into a social situation and hope that a good first impression will make them fall in love with each other!"

"I don't—"

"You have to make sure that they're complementary to each other, and that any relationship can last!"

"But I—"

"And you especially can't ship kids! Except friendshipping, that's okay. But not romantic shipping. Kids are too young to know who they are, or what they want in a romantic partner. If they even want romance at all yet."

"RUBY!" Gwen shouted at the now visibly riled up girl.

Ruby blinked in surprise, before flushing. "Um... sorry. I may have gotten a little carried away."

"No, you think?"

Awkwardly avoiding Gwen's deadpan gaze, Ruby shrugged. "Shipping is my hobby, but I take it very seriously. I just wanted to make sure that you did too."

"Yeah, I think I got that part. So what, you're going to teach me how to Ship properly?" she asked flippantly.

Ruby nodded cheerfully, "Yep. I decided to take you as an apprentice."

Gwen's jaw fell. "Wait, what? Hold on, I wasn't being— you can't just decide— what?"

"Well, Weiss has her padawans, and Blake is critiquing Ilia's earlier reign as queen, plus all those times Yang's started up a class for paronomasia at Beacon, so I figured I should try teaching too. And nobody in my Loop knows as much about Shipping as me, but they're not interested in learning, so... I found someone bad at it that I can help improve."

"Hold on, what do you mean *bad* at it?"

"You tried to launch three Ships, and managed to fail so bad they *all* went after the wrong person before dumping each other before the first date ended," Ruby answered in a flat voice.

"...so, apprentice huh. That could be fun, I guess."

Ruby grinned.

2.21 ThanatosTiger

“So, what are your plans for Culture Day, Neil?” Max asked, barely concealing a smirk.

“Max, ignoring the fact I learned my lesson, the presence of Cameron Campbell has made it clear what an unchecked ego could cause.”

“What you think he’s gonna take your version of the tale and saturate it even more in pop culture?” Max’s eyes widened as he considered who he was talking about. “Uh, forget I said anything.”

“Yeah, let’s deal with today’s loop, then relax in the tent.”

“Good morning campers!” David’s too cheery voice cried out.

“God! Dammit?”

Max stared at the collection of toy guns, foam swords, water pistols and balloons covering a nearby table.

David pointed to the table and began explaining, “Kids, I once met four girls that taught me quite a lot about the world we live in. Since they couldn’t be here, I asked them how I could share their culture with you guys, and they suggested this. Everyone pick your weapon, and have fun while Gwen and Quartermaster steal, er, make plenty of food for us.”

Everyone rushed toward the toy weaponry, arming themselves against each other. It was chaos, but thankfully no fires broke out.

Max walked over to David with a smirk. “Guess Team RWBY saved Culture Day. Real miracle workers.”

“Max, Culture Day is amazing no matter what.”

Max sighed. “Just for that, I’m blasting you with the Super Soaker first."

-One person in a Loop, often the main character, is an Anchor. They are the person who first starts time looping.

-There is always at least one Anchor present in a given Time Loop snippet, though it may not be the local one.

-The standard pattern for a loop is that the Anchor (and whoever else is Looping there) come to awareness in a loop at a particular point in the story. From there, events will play out as influenced by the Loopers present, acting with the benefit of their foreknowledge, until either a predetermined end point is reached or all the Loopers have copped it.

-To be Awake is to be aware of the time loops (that is, to have gone back in time this time.)

-The Anchor is the only character guaranteed to be Awake. Even after others have started looping, it is mostly random as to whether they will be Awake this particular loop.

-Crossovers, fusions, and alternate pasts can also take place. It is perfectly possible, for example, to have the characters Awaken into a loop which conforms to a fanfic universe rather than reality.

-Loops do not have to be in chronological order, but it is strongly preferred that they not require a mutually contradictory order (where

A must be before B and B must be before A.)

-Just about every Looper is very, very stir crazy.

Compiler Commentary

-2.1: Summer camp isn't the same everywhere, Max.

-2.2: What's your favorite fairy tale? Wait, wrong series.

-2.3: Yeah, it's not like Max has a heart under all that snark or anything, it's not like he cares, he's just grumpy old Max.

-2.4: YOU KICK THAT PUPPY SPACE KID!

-2.5: I mean... yeah, that's pretty much how I'd react too. No need for melodrama.

-2.6: That's not a talk anybody wants to have.

-2.7: And this is why I don't ship. That and I have no idea what the heck romance even is, anyway.

-2.8: You gotta admit, that really had to hurt. David taking some time to think is entirely reasonable.

-2.9: Nikki is pretty chill with things that aren't abominations of science.

-2.10: I mean humans are kinda boring, I get that. Wouldn't go for Graggle myself, I don't swing that way, but hey, I get it.

-2.11: Max isn't the best at this whole friendship thing, but when he applies himself he really shines.

-2.12: It would take a while before either of them were able to fill their end of the agreement.

-2.13: David is not going to let rabid diabetics anywhere near his kids! Or rabid bears, either.

-2.14: Awwww, he's using the flag as a blanket without thinking of the implications! Let's NOT tell him.

-2.15: Chalchiuhtlicue you fool! YOU KNOW NOT WHAT YOU HAVE UNLEASHED!

-2.16: But wouldn't they be the yellow team?

-2.17: They're family now, you can't tell me otherwise.

-2.18: Welcome back girls! Try not to freak out David too much, we only have two counselors.

-2.19: Or cultists. David won't let cultists near his kids.

-2.20: Surprisingly this actually didn't end in explosions.

-2.21: Well, to be fair, Remnant does have a fascination with weapons...

The Infinite Loops is a multi-setting, multi-author shared multiverse, with contributions from the Spacebattles forums. If you would like to write for the Camp Camp loops, join us at the Miscellaneous Infinite Loops thread. If you would like to write for other fandoms, check out the Miscellaneous Infinite Loops thread and the Hub Index to see where they might be.

https://forums.spacebattles.com/threads/infinite-loops-miscellaneous-section-catch-3x3.450936/

https://forums.spacebattles.com/threads/infinite-loops-index-the-hub-back-up.448634/